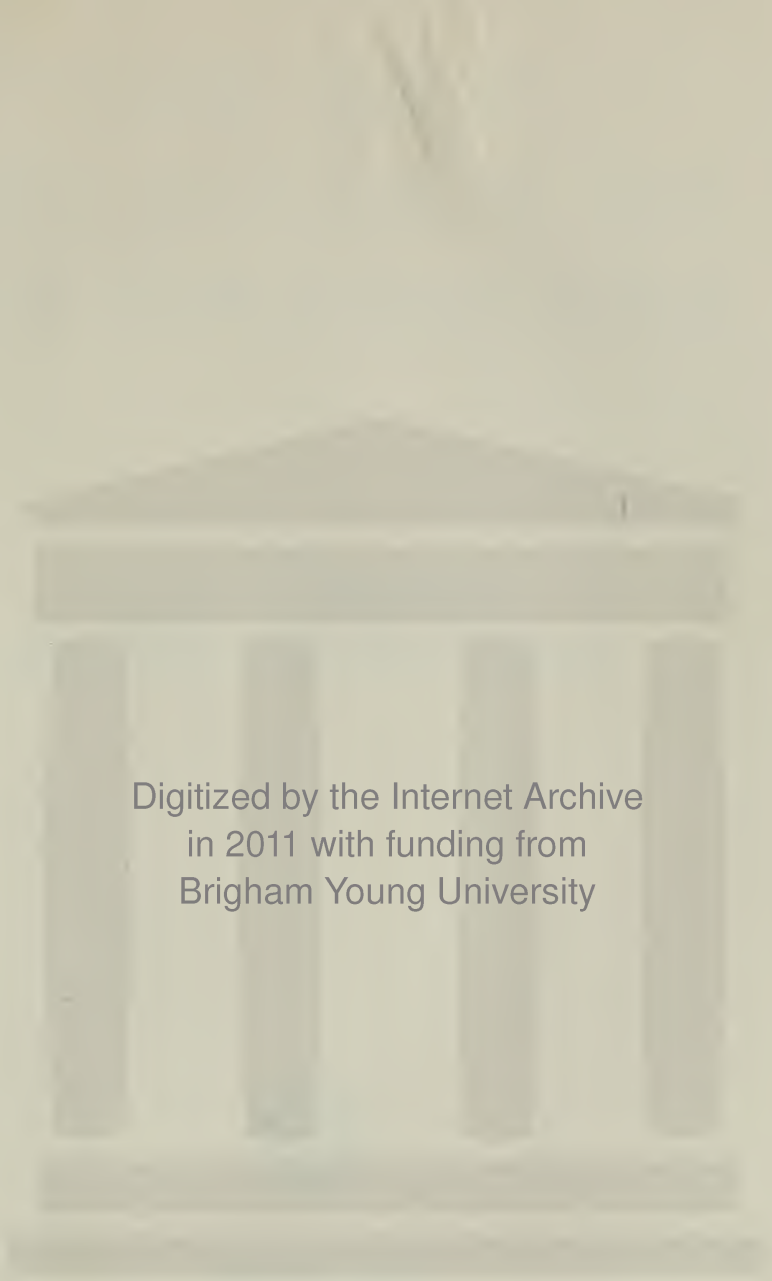

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

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"Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man."

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE new psychology of the unconscious, associated chiefly with the work of Freud, has suffered the fate of many new movements of thought. On the one hand it has raised a loud outcry on the part of some of those, not always well-informed, to whom its doctrines seem incredibly strange and unpleasant. On the other hand, it has been pushed to an extreme by some of its supporters, and its suppositions have been asserted as though they were proved facts; sweeping generalisations have been made prematurely, for example, in reference to the influence of sex on mental life.

Some of the ideas of this new psychology, however, have withstood criticism and their value as contributions to general and educational psychology as well as to medical psychology has become more and more apparent. In this book I have tried to give as clear an exposition as is possible, in a short space, of such a complex matter as the " new psychology," and to indicate what is fairly well-

established and what is still speculative theory or hasty generalisation.

I have also particularly tried to bring the main doctrines into line with " orthodox " psychology, and to show how they may be regarded as unfamiliar examples of recognised fundamental laws of the mind ; that, indeed, so far as the new psychology can be counted true, it is not entirely " new."

In this way I hope to make the new psychology, so far as it seems valid, more comprehensible to the student of orthodox psychology, and to lessen the objection to it based merely upon mistaken *a priori* grounds. For it should be judged upon evidence, and not upon misconceptions as to its inconsistency with a generally accepted psychology.

I have not confined myself to an examination and discussion of the work of Freud and Jung, but I have given almost as much attention to a group of psychologists, mainly British, whom, for the sake of brevity, I have called the neo-Freudians, most of whom are also medical men, and who, while rejecting some of Freud's doctrines, have been greatly influenced by certain of his main ideas.[1]

[1] *E.g.* : Drs. W. H. R. Rivers, C. S. Myers, W. McDougall, Bernard Hart, T. W. Mitchell, W. Brown, Crichton Miller and J. A. Hadfield. The collective name must not be taken to indicate that the members agree even on all important points. Nor does the name do justice to the large amount of original work which we owe to this group.

With the precautions and limitations mentioned above, it seems to the author that the new psychology may be of extraordinary interest, not only to the medical man, but to the teacher, the parent, the minister of religion, the lawyer, the man of letters, and, indeed, to all who would understand a little of human nature.

Just at present there is an outcry about the dangers of psycho-analytic thought and practice in the hands of quacks. Some of the dangers are indicated in this book. They will be lessened, in the writer's judgment, by a more critical treatment of the subject and by a more widespread understanding of the instability of mental processes under the influence of the unconscious, and of the possible unintentional effects of suggestion under inexpert handling.

I wish here to make it quite clear that the practical application of the methods of psycho-analysis to cases of nervous diseases is a matter with which the amateur should certainly not meddle. The physician trained in general medicine and in psychology is the proper person, or there may be collaboration between medical man and trained psychological investigator. In many cases of nervous disease, possibly in all, there is some physical element involved, and

medical skill is required for this,[1] though it must not be supposed that the ordinary medical training is adequate for dealing with psychological matters. It is obvious that where there is a physical factor involved, an attempt to deal with the trouble on purely psychological lines will result in neglect of treatment which may be essential to recovery, and grave consequences may ensue. Nor, as Freud suggests, can the psychologist always be relied upon to know when it is necessary to consult a medical man.

On the other hand, incompetent psychological treatment, whether by medical man or layman, may also cause more evil than it cures. For one thing, the power of suggestion, often so helpful in a mental case, may also be a hindrance, leading to the imagination of troubles and ills which do not exist, or to the exaggeration of the importance of those which do.

Having said this, I would point out, however, that a few failures in psycho-analytic treatment are not an adequate cause for general denunciation of the method used, any more than are the few deaths that result from mistaken diagnosis or treatment by medical men, or from a slip of the knife in a serious operation. Nor is the fact that

[1] On this point see *Functional Nerve Disease*, edited by Crichton Miller, especially chap. i. and p. 183.

there are quacks practising psycho-analysis an adequate reason for the refusal to recognise the value of results gained by the method, any more than the excessive and sometimes fatal reliance on suggestion by Christian Scientists is a reason why medical men should abandon all use of suggestion.

I may say that in those cases described later, in which I took an active part myself, the persons concerned were, to the best of my knowledge, in thoroughly good physical health: their symptoms were of the nature of occasional irrational anxiety or fears or other emotions roused by apparently quite inadequate causes.[1]

Moral dangers are also thought to attach to the new psychology, rightly so, I think, if some interpretations as to repression are accepted. These dangers, however, are, I think, best combated by showing the invalidity of the assumption that what is true for a neurotic patient is true for the average man; and also by showing that unconscious impulses, when brought to consciousness, come within the sphere of moral control, and therefore of moral responsibility. Admittedly a growing conviction as to the powerful influence of unconscious motives in human conduct

[1] Details in reference to some of these cases are occasionally modified to avoid possible recognition.

may modify our moral jugdments. So far, however, as our studies as to unconscious influences deepen our knowledge of human nature, we shall be gaining help for moral advance, as indeed has already been proved in the treatment of juvenile delinquents.

For the sake of the reader already familiar with psycho-analytic literature, I may indicate briefly the main characteristics of my treatment of the subject, especially in reference to its correlation with orthodox psychology.

I have connected the act of repression with the general tendency of the mind to show aversion from the unpleasant, distinguishing three kinds of repression: deliberate, non-deliberate but conscious, and unconscious. The first two come under the aversion principle; unconscious repression is regarded as a habit which has become automatic. Elimination by non-deliberate repression is regarded as a similar phenomenon to the elimination of the unsuccessful in learning by the method of trial and error. Displacement of feeling and prolonged emotional word-reactions are treated as extreme cases of " short-circuited " associations. Symbolism in dreams is shown to be used at times in quite trivial ways, and so to be not always ascribable to any serious censorship. Repression of

higher impulses, as well as of lower, is regarded as a possible cause of dreams. Incidentally, attention is called to the fact that Freud's main thesis as to dreams and the censorship is to be found in Plato's discussion of dreams.

For the present edition there has been a revision of the whole book (which was first issued and reprinted under the title of "Dreams and the Unconscious") with the addition of another chapter and of substantial new matter in earlier chapters. I am glad to find that, after six years, there is little that seems to need correction, in spite of the great development of psycho-analytic work and literature. Some of those developments are, I think, unconvincing and inadequately supported by suitable evidence, a point I have dealt with further in the new chapter.

The influence of the new psychology in the meantime has spread considerably. In education, for example, it has shown itself in some extreme views as to the desirability of almost complete freedom for the child and as to the wrongness of all punishment. Such extending influences make it all the more important for parents and teachers to make some study of the psychological basis of these ideas.

The title of the book has been changed from "Dreams and the Unconscious" to "The New

Psychology of the Unconscious," as it was felt that dreams occupy a relatively small place in the exposition.

C.W.V.

The University, Birmingham.
September, 1928.

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY

WITHIN the last fifteen or twenty years certain revolutionary ideas about the nature of the human mind and the influence of unconscious factors upon consciousness, have been rapidly gaining ground. This new psychology of the unconscious has attracted attention chiefly for two reasons: First, because it has been instrumental in helping to cure many cases of nervous disease, especially soldiers who seemed to be suffering permanent effects of "shell-shock," or overstrain. Medical men who have accepted, or at least have been greatly influenced by this new psychology, and who have made use of the now famous method of psycho-analysis, have been able to bring about cures in some cases in which the ordinary medical treatment had failed. These cures have been brought about, apparently, by the dragging up into consciousness of memories of experiences long buried in the unconscious.

Sometimes cures have followed so instantaneously upon the recovery of the memory as to appear almost miraculous. For example, one Canadian soldier entered hospital suffering from nervous debility. Examination revealed that he had forgotten a great deal about his past life, not only in the army, but before. He was not sure if he was married, but when he found in his pocket a photograph of a young woman he supposed it was his wife, and wanted to see her. Dr. William McDougall, under whose care he came, insisted upon continued attempts at recall, assisted by hypnotism. Eventually the lost memories came back with a rush, and almost at once there was a great increase of physical vigour. This was tested by an instrument for recording the strength of the hand-grip—the dynamometer. Up to the time of the recovery of memory, the patient had only been capable of a grip represented by 30 kilogrammes. Within an hour of his recovery of memory he squeezed the instrument until it recorded 90 kilogrammes.[1] The cure in this case was exceptionally rapid, but there are now a considerable number of cases of this type on record.

The second reason why this new psychology has

[1] Article *Summary*, by Wm. McDougall, in *Functional Nerve Disease*, edited by H. Crichton Miller.

attracted so much attention is because of its exceedingly novel interpretation of dreams, which are said to be due to the activities of the unconscious self. Their apparent absurdity is explicable, it is claimed, when the feelings and desires in the unconscious are brought to light, and when we understand the curious symbolism of the unconscious, which seems remarkably similar in the dreams of many different people and which appears further in some of the language of early myths.

The Work of Freud

This new psychology is largely due to the work of Freud, a medical man who practised in Vienna, a fact which has probably militated against the reception of his theories in some countries.

Freud, being a doctor, was first interested in nervous diseases and their psychology, and his special concern with abnormal persons certainly colours all his work. The psychology which has grown from his work, however, professes also to throw much light upon our normal mental life, as well as upon dreams, which have been especially studied as a means of discovering the underlying causes of mental trouble and nervous disorders.

The Freudian views met at first with considerable scorn and derision, and in many quarters there is

still violent opposition to them. I confess that Freud's ideas first impressed me as fantastic. He indulges in unnecessarily sweeping generalisations. He finds the influence of sex in almost every abnormal mental process, though he covers this by a paradoxically wide interpretation of the term sex.

In spite, however, of the forbidding aspects of Freud's position, much of his work has now won the recognition and the admiration of many medical men and psychologists throughout the world. Several recent volumes entirely devoted to this new psychology originate in Harley Street. The British Psychological Society and other psychological associations have given much time to discussion of the Freudian psychology. One of the most cautious and critical of English doctor-psychologists, who had had wide experience in military hospitals for nervous diseases, said that there was hardly a case among those with which he had to deal, arising out of the war, which the Freudian theories did not help him to understand better, " not a day of clinical experience in which Freud's theories may not be of direct practical use in diagnosis and treatment." [1]

It is not, however, solely upon grave mental

[1] The late W. H. R. Rivers, in " Freud's Psychology of the Unconscious," *The Lancet*, June 16, 1927.

disease or on dreams that the new psychology throws light. Many impulsive and unreasonable actions, many prejudices and irrational fears and anxieties, many involuntary betrayals of inner motives, lapses of memory, slips of the tongue and other common aberrations of everyday life appear in a more comprehensible light on the hypothesis of the new psychology of the unconscious.

It is partly as a result of the study of these in my own case, and in those of intimate friends, that I feel the value, for the study of normal psychology, of much of the work of Freud and his successors. And this in spite of the fact that some of it, when reduced to fundamentals, is not as revolutionary as it may at first appear. For, as I hope to show later, we can connect some of Freud's theories, after they are modified as criticism seems to demand, with fundamental laws of the mind already familiar to psychology.

This linking up of psycho-analytic and general psychology helps both in the establishing of parts of the new psychology, and in the criticism of other aspects. For studied alone it tends to become unbalanced.

We shall begin with a brief study of mental conflict, of the repression of impulses and emotions, and of the way in which such repressions affect

waking life. We shall consider, at the same time, the evidence afforded by examples of the cures of mental disorders through psycho-analysis. Later, we shall turn to the study of the dream as a means of the release of such repressions and of the use of dreams in the discovery of unconscious influences at work in the mind. Finally, we shall consider the effect of unconscious influences in the everyday life of normal individuals.

Chapter II

MENTAL CONFLICT AND REPRESSION

THE main tenet of the Freudian psychology is that there is a great part of the mind of which we are unconscious, and which, nevertheless, has an enormous influence upon our thoughts, feelings and actions, and which is especially active as a cause of dreams.

Now psychology has long taught that there are often influences at work on our minds which are not present in consciousness. One of the leading present-day psychologists has gone so far as to say, "My conscious activity is *never* the sole factor involved."* At any moment the results of many previous experiences which I have forgotten, and the influence of instinctive dispositions, may modify and even largely determine my action, without my actually thinking of them or even without their entering into my consciousness at all, that is, as we might say in popular language, without their being "felt" at all.

* G. F. Stout, *Manual of Psychology*, 3rd ed., p. 23. Stout had also previously clearly expounded the function of certain unconscious factors in his *Analytic Psychology*.

Most "orthodox" psychologists would mean, then, by the unconscious chiefly such mental dispositions, and traces of past experiences as had once acted in full consciousness, and which may at any moment rise into full consciousness, provided there is an appropriate stimulus or association. They do not usually rise into consciousness, because full consciousness of them is unnecessary, and because the range and scope of a given moment of consciousness is limited. They apparently "function" without entering consciousness, though exactly how remains a mystery. But when it is necessary or useful they may come to consciousness.

Freud's view of the unconscious goes much further than this. For him the unconscious includes many impulses and memories which remain buried in the depths of the mind, and *never*, except in dreams, rise to consciousness—unless dragged to the surface by psychoanalysis.

We cannot discuss here fully the difficult question as to what exactly is meant by the unconscious, and as to how an impulse or a memory can be an unconscious one. We may, however, note that it is not necessary to regard these unconscious desires and memories as similar to what we know

as conscious experience.[1] To me the term "unconscious *mental* process," strictly speaking, seems self-contradictory; but it may be a convenient term to express processes which seem to be caused by mental processes, and to result in further mental processes, without the intervening process being itself, so far as we know, a conscious one. And for the time being we may even find it convenient to think of the unconscious as a kind of other mind within our own, in which are the memories of the past, and especially the desires which we have rejected and thrust from us; and we may imagine that such "repressed" impulses, now buried in the unconscious, often press upward and strive to come into the fully conscious mind, but are successfully kept from appearing, except perhaps in a disguised form.

But, if this be true, how comes it that we have such an unconscious part of the mind—a sort of private family vault in which so many desires and memories of the past are buried, with this added inconvenience that their ghosts are constantly trying to return to the living mind and actually succeed in influencing it, without the mind knowing it, yet with no possibility of a

[1] It is important at the outset to beware of the popular fallacy of confusing "consciousness" with "self-consciousness," *i.e.* thought about, or attention to the self or to the experience of the moment *as* our experience.

complete resurrection, except by special assistance from without? And why should such a resurrection sometimes mean a renewal of mental health and vigour?

For an answer to these questions we must study Freud's doctrine of repression, a central point of his whole system, and one which, with varying modifications, is accepted by an important group of medical psychologists.

Repression

We may think of repression, in the first instance, as the resistance we make to a desire or impulse which we think we ought not to satisfy, or which we do not wish to satisfy because it conflicts with another to which we give preference; or it may mean the attempt we make to put some unpleasant memory out of mind.

This idea of repression is, of course, not a new one. It is rather in the great importance that Freud attaches to such repression and to the consequences that follow, and in the idea of an unconscious type of repression that his originality lies.

Psychology, and, indeed, commonsense, already recognised, for example, that attention tends to turn from the displeasure that unsatisfied strivings tend to cause, and so from the desires themselves, and that the normal man may try to crush an

affection which he knows to be hopeless, or to stifle a temptation that is dangerous. It was also held that by refusing to give way to impulses and feelings one could eventually kill them.

Mental conflict, then, and the effort to repress are familiar facts. The new psychology, however, adds several ideas. First, that there is a type of unconscious repression—when the effort to repress is not deliberate, when the repression itself occurs unconsciously; this is said to be characteristic of the greater amount of repression in childhood. Secondly, it is held that while much repression may be biologically valuable—as saving the organism from unnecessary pain and constant struggle—it may often prove eventually harmful, perhaps by exhausting nervous energy; and, as we have seen, some of the cures of mental diseases during and before the war have followed the bringing back to full consciousness of such buried repressions.

The reader will readily, on the basis of his own experience, accept the statement above that we may repress many desires and impulses to such an extent that they cease to trouble us, and may even pass from memory entirely. What will appear more questionable is the idea that such repressed impulses may continue to influence our

mental life, even when they themselves are not consciously felt, and that such repression may in some cases be harmful.

This will appear more credible if we study a few cases of the forgetting of past experiences, in which the forgotten experience seemed to continue to have an influence upon the mind of the individual, not merely in dreams but in waking life. These will show us that not only unfulfilled desires may be repressed and forgotten, but that we may repress the memory of experiences so striking or important as to appear unforgettable. Such examples are best to be found in the records of cases of cures in military nerve hospitals. One has already been given, in which a soldier had almost completely forgotten his marriage.

The continued influence of the forgotten experience is shown more clearly, however, in the following case described by Dr. W. H. R. Rivers,[1] which bids fair to become a classical example. It is the case of a young medical officer who even before the war had a horror of closed-in spaces, such as tunnels and narrow cells. He would never travel by the tube railway, and was seized

[1] "A Case of Claustrophobia," *Lancet*, Aug. 18, 1917. Republished in *Instinct and the Unconscious* / Cambridge University Press, 1921.

with fear when in a train which passed through a tunnel. One can imagine his intense distress when on entering a dug-out he was given a spade and told it was for use in case he was buried alive. His sleep was greatly disturbed, and his health became so bad that he was invalided home. Instructions to keep his thoughts from the war and to dwell exclusively on pleasant topics proved useless. He had terrifying dreams of warfare, from which he would awake, sweating profusely, and thinking he was dying. At this stage he came under the care of Dr. Rivers. The patient was asked to try to remember any dreams he might have and to record any memories which came into his mind while thinking over the dreams. Shortly afterwards he had a dream, and as he lay in bed thinking it over there came into his mind an incident which seemed to have happened when he was about three years of age, and which had so greatly affected him at the time that it now seemed to the patient almost impossible that it could ever have been forgotten. He recalled that as a little boy, he and his friends used to visit an old man in a house near his own, and to take him odd articles discarded at home, in return for which they received a copper or two. On one occasion he went alone, down the long, dark passage leading

to the old man's home, and on turning back found that the door at the opening of the passage had banged to and he was unable to escape. Just then a dog in the passage began to bark savagely, and the little child was terrified, and continued so until he was released. After another dream the patient woke up to find himself repeating "McCann, McCann." It occurred to him, suddenly, that this was the name of the old man. Inquiry of the parents of the patient revealed the fact that an old rag-and-bone man had lived in such a house as the patient remembered, and that his name was McCann.

The result of this recovery of memory, with the explanation of his abnormal fears of closed-in spaces, had a great effect on the patient. A few days afterwards he lost his fear of closed-in spaces, and he afterwards travelled in tube railways and tunnels without discomfort. Indeed, he was so confident of himself at once that he wished Dr. Rivers to lock him up in some subterranean chamber of the hospital as a proof of his cure.

The particular point to be noted here is that an entirely forgotten experience continued, apparently, to have an influence upon conscious mental life. Other points of interest are these: that the original

experience was an intensely emotional and disturbing one; that the experience was recalled through reflecting on a dream; that the conscious effort of will to banish the unreasoning fears had no effect; that the fearsome experience, though repressed until forgotten, found its way out to consciousness through the repeated emotions of fear. This constant fear was stimulated by being in closed-in spaces, that is, by situations similar to the original one, though that was forgotten.

It is true that we need not in such a case regard the memory of the savage dog incident as remaining active in some independent but unconscious manner. In accordance with the well-known laws of association, the following might have happened; that, after the dog incident, narrow shut-in spaces recalled the incident, and so roused the fear. Thus an intimate association was set up between the idea of a shut-in space and the fear which continued independently of the memory of the actually originating cause. Such forgotten unconscious associations are common. It is still true, however, to speak of the repressed memory or experience influencing present consciousness, and the main problem in cases like that above is to explain the forgetting of such

striking incidents, more especially when they occur later than early childhood.

A Case of Partial Repression

A case fundamentally similar, but of a milder type, came under my own observation. A friend of mine, to all appearance a perfectly normal young man, experienced, though only occasionally, and for a few minutes at a time, intense emotions of fear, for no apparent reason. At his urgent request, after he had heard something of the Freudian psychology, I sought to find the explanation. I tried to analyse his dreams for him, and also submitted him to the word association test, to be described later. As the result of this examination, there was brought back to his mind the memory of intense fears he had occasionally experienced as a boy when troubled about certain sex matters, of which he had been left in entire ignorance. We now discovered that the circumstances, which had recently caused the mysterious paroxysms of fear, had certain connections with the imaginative fears of boyhood and with the causes of those fears; an explanation of his recent fears which gave him great relief, and seemed to make possible a new attitude towards situations which had tended to revive them, so that the fears have never recurred since.

Now there is one important difference between this case and the cause of claustrophobia. My friend had not so completely forgotten the fears of childhood as the young officer had forgotten the terrifying experience in the dark passage. Indeed, my friend recalled fairly readily these childish fears, though I gathered he had rarely thought of them since boyhood, and had never associated them with the occasional paroxysms of unreasoning fear which he had felt in recent years. Yet it seemed probable that the boyish experiences were the origin of the fears of manhood, as will appear more clearly when I give further details in describing later the method of psychoanalysis used.

We have had in these two examples, two cases in which the degree of forgetting was different. When the repression was complete there was much more serious trouble. It seems indeed possible to find cases illustrating a whole series of stages of repressions, some even slighter than the case of my friend, and with even milder consequences, of which I will give examples in later chapters. We have some more extreme in which insanity ensues (or, perhaps, we should say which accompany some cases of insanity), but which also show the possibility of the influence of past forgotten

experiences on the conscious processes of to-day. Taking the extreme case of insanity, we may note the following instance.* A young woman was engaged to be married to a cobbler. At the last moment he jilted her. The emotional shock was very severe, and resulted eventually in a type of insanity. The actual events of the engagement and the jilting were entirely forgotten; but their continued influence on the mind of the unhappy girl was shown by the fact that all day long and every day she continued to make movements like those performed by a cobbler in sewing shoes. This way of a buried group of ideas and impulses finding its release in some symbolic form of action is very characteristic, and we shall have to refer to it again in dealing with dreams.

Such cases of entire forgetting may seem very mysterious. But we can readily bring them into line with generally accepted psychological laws.

Repression and the Avoidance of the Unpleasant

It is a recognised general *tendency* of the mind (though not an invariable *habit*) to turn away from the unpleasant. It is true that for the sake of some ulterior end, we may continue to attend to the unpleasant; in some cases fundamental instincts and interests compel us to attend even

* Cited by Dr. Hart in his admirable little book, *The Psychology of Insanity*: Cambridge University Press.

to the unpleasant, and sometimes, indeed, the unpleasant and the horrible fascinate us; but the mind is here in conflict with itself, for there is undoubtedly this general tendency to turn from the unpleasant *qua* unpleasant. Now suppose we turn repeatedly from some unpleasant memory, putting it out of mind, as we say, we are doing something very like acquiring a habit; so that we may regard a successful confirmed repression as a sort of habit which the mind has acquired in relation to a particular idea or set of ideas, and which, as in the case of many habitual acts, may occur automatically without entering consciousness, unless and until attention is specially called to it.

What is the psychological or biological value of such repression? It is evident that complete repression may save the mind from misery at the time. We see, indeed, a new meaning in the phrase "unbearable" misery, if we realise that the mind may entirely throw out all conscious memory of the experience when the pain becomes too great, just as consciousness itself is ejected when physical pain becomes unbearable and the patient faints. Even minor unpleasantnesses may be forgotten with benefit to the mind. It would appear, however, that in many cases the saving

of pain by repression is accomplished at the expense of nervous energy, which we may regard as exhausted in the continued though unconscious act of repression.

We know how exhausting it is to try to attend to work when we have to ignore noises and other external impressions, which are interfering with complete attention, or when we have to keep expelling from the mind some more insistent and intensely interesting idea which has nothing to do with our work. The repression which takes place in abnormal cases may exhaust energy in a similar way; and we may also regard it physiologically as having the effect of cutting off a portion of the brain from its usual inter-connection with other parts, and thus interfering with the normal working of the supply of nervous energy.

Mental Conflict

So far we have considered examples of the repression of the memory of unpleasant experiences, and their continual influence, notwithstanding their being forgotten. But we must expand this idea of repression, if we are to understand Freud's theory. We must look on repression as applied in the first place to impulses and desires, and as one mode of solving problems of mental conflict.

Mental conflict may result from the existence

of two desires which are incompatible with one another. The conflict is more serious when one desire is based on a strong fundamental instinct, such as that of sex, or pugnacity, or fear, and when it is opposed by another instinctive desire or by desires powerfully reinforced by moral training or by social convention. Repression of the sex instinct takes a prominent place in Freud's psychology, a far too prominent place in the judgment even of some of those who readily acknowledge the great value of much of his work. Possibly this is because Freud was chiefly concerned with neurotic patients, for unhappy or abnormal sex experiences are a frequent cause of nervous trouble.

It is evident, however, that if repression of powerful impulses is of significance in mental life and health, the sex impulses are likely to be of special importance, in view not only of their strength in most individuals, but because they have to be kept in check more completely than have other impulses. Yet it is obvious that we often have to repress many varied impulses based upon other instincts or emotions. Thus the instinct of pugnacity, roused by a father's excessive severity, has to be repressed constantly by the youth, and irritation may often be repressed

for the sake of the feelings or the good opinion of others. The repression of fear in warfare seems to have been a prolific cause of nervous trouble in the great war, especially because of the abnormally prolonged strain, without the natural outlet for immediate reprisals or flight to which nature prompts. Anger and resentment has often to be repressed by the employee for fear of the employer, or, nowadays, *vice versa.*

So strong indeed does the impulse of self assertion and of the " will to power " appear as an urge which may lead to internal conflict, that, it is held by one school of thought, led by Adler, to be the main source of mental conflict. The child feels strongly his inferiority to his parents and yet he craves to feel his own power. So much importance does Adler attach to this view that he actually interprets some supposed sexual impulses as really desires for power.[1] His treatment indeed tends to be as one-sided as that of Freud, not allowing for the rich complexity of human impulses.

This criticism admitted, however, it is worth noting that self-assertion is a tendency almost always liable to be stirred. It is less subject to

[1] See *The Neurotic Constitution*, Chaps. iii. and iv. (English Translation, London, 1921).

variations from time to time than is sex, it is present in a more powerful and complete form in early childhood, and it competes with similar assertiveness in many others, and with other impulses of our own, such as sympathy and fear, and with devotion to others and to ideals. It may therefore be accepted as a strong and frequent source of mental conflict.

When we are faced by conflicting desires we may choose one path deliberately, or we may act somewhat impulsively in response to one impulse; in either case we may or may not consciously repress the other desire which disappears for a time. By repeated choice of one desire before others the rejected desires may eventually disappear, and we think them dead. According to the new psychology, however, many of these desires are not dead but only repressed; they exist still in the unconscious self, and they are only kept from entering clear consciousness by the constant, though unconscious, force of repression exerted by the mind—a habit of repression, as we have said.

One of the most important and difficult questions raised here is whether such repressions are necessarily harmful, as may at first seem to be the case judging from some of the pathological evidence. This question we shall refer to again in later

chapters, but we may say here that all that seems clearly established by the evidence of such cases as we have been considering is that, after the recall of repressed memories, cures are frequently effected. We have no absolute proof, however, that the actual repression was the cause of the original trouble. The forgetting might have been an accompaniment of the development of the disease, the disease itself being caused by a more ultimate cause—the violence of the conflict itself, for example. Further, even if the repression was the partial cause of the breakdown, we cannot say whether the consequences would not have been as bad even if repression had not ensued. For the time being at least repression may save the organism some immediate injury; this would be quite consistent with the possibility of still greater injury arising through its indefinite continuance. Lastly, assuming that in the type of neurotic case we have been considering, repression is harmful and is a cause of the nervous disease that ensues, we cannot at this stage infer that all repression in relatively healthy individuals, is also harmful.

In the preceding paragraphs we have several times referred to repression as though it was due to a conscious and deliberate decision of the

mind to reject an unpleasant memory. But this, as we have already hinted, does not always seem to be the case. Indeed, there is a marked trend of opinion towards the view that the processes of repression, especially those which succeed, are " unconscious." Throughout this book I distinguish the two types, when necessary, as deliberate repression and non-deliberate (instead of " unconscious ") repression, because it seems to me that we cannot assume that non-deliberate repression does not contribute any element to the consciousness of the moment. Only when the deliberate or non-deliberate conscious repressions have succeeded, and when the effects of their activity continue without their own continuance as elements of consciousness, should we apply the term unconscious repression.

Types of Repression

Non-deliberate repression would be quite comprehensible from the point of view of normal psychology. We have already spoken of the general tendency of the mind to turn away from the unpleasant. This is sometimes conscious and deliberate. We do it of set purpose. We say we will not dwell on unhappy ideas.* But frequently,

* Of itself, of course, this determination would never secure the forgetting of an unpleasant idea. The process is helped by the occupying of the mind with other thoughts. And it is doubtful whether such deliberate repression ever leads to more than temporary forgetting.

and probably far more often, we repress without conscious thought or deliberate decision. The tendency, indeed, is more fundamental than thought itself, and probably appears at the earliest stages in the evolution of living organism, in the form of an automatic turning from the unpleasant and towards the pleasant.

The clearest insight, however, into the problem of non-deliberate repression is, I think, to be gained from a study of the processes involved in the gradual learning of some skilled action, such as that involved in learning to use a typewriter or to play golf. This method of learning is called the method of trial and error or, better, of trial and elimination of error, and seems to be the method by which animals as well as human beings acquire habits of skill.

Repression as a Form of "Trial and Error"

In practising golf a useless muscular contraction in one drive is gradually eliminated in succeeding ones, though we may be quite unable to say exactly what modifications took place in the succeeding drives. Only very gradually are the wrong movements eliminated and the right one stamped in. "Probably the thrill of pleasure experienced when we feel that we have done the right thing helps to stamp in the tendency towards

the performance of that action, so that on another occasion it is more likely to recur than it was previously."[1] It is quite likely that the unpleasantness of failure leads to an avoidance of a repetition of the useless action—an automatic tendency for it not to occur, which we may also call a repression. Now this inhibition of the unsuccessful action is usually quite unintentional if not unconscious. We can sometimes detect an erroneous movement, but normally, especially as we get more skilled, the modifications become more and more automatic, and whether we are "in form" or out of it depends on the working of these mysterious automatic inhibitions of wrong impulses, and the facilitation of the right ones.

In some such way we may also suppose that impulses and desires which only lead to disappointment, the satisfaction of which is constantly denied by circumstances or by stronger conflicting desires, may tend to be inhibited, and eventually repressed, without any deliberate willing to repress them. It should be noticed that we have no proof here of any repression which is unconscious in the strict sense of the term. Each repression of an impulse—even in its own tendency to with-

[1] Quoted from the writer's *Experimental Psychology*, Part ii. ch. x., where an experiment on the method of trial and error is described.

draw owing to unpleasantness of conflict or to unsuccessful striving—may contribute an element in the total consciousness of the moment, even when there is no deliberate willing to repress, or even when we are unaware of any repression taking place.

This so-called unconscious repression, which we have called non-deliberate, is thought to be especially characteristic of repression in childhood. That it should be so is consistent with the general nature of the infant mind which learns largely by the method of trial and error, the child not yet having reached the period in which conscious control and deliberate decision dominate.

It may be noted that Rivers regarded unconscious repression (which he calls "suppression") as a normal healthy process in childhood, comparable to that forgetting of earlier experiences which is biologically useful to animals, such as the caterpillar-butterfly, which pass through different stages of development. Rivers regarded such suppression in adults as a regression to an activity characteristic of childhood.*

Finally, it is quite possible that, even when there is a deliberate attempt to repress, there may also be accompanying it a non-deliberate

* See *Instinct and the Unconscious*: especially p. 152.

repression, and this may be the really effective factor.

Note on the Utility of Repression.

I am indebted to Professor Laird for a helpful comment on an earlier paragraph of this chapter. He writes: "If, as you do, you make repression part of the general process of turning away from what is painful, it is surely clear that in most cases such repression is useful, and this seems in line with your general point, *i.e.* that repression is [only] occasionally hurtful, and that the hurtful cases (at least when pronounced) are the neurotic ones."

I should agree that repression is always "useful" in the sense that it gets rid of some unpleasantness. And, usually, no doubt, there is a gain to mental health by any reduction of unpleasantness. But it does not seem to me certain that the gain through reduced pain may not be more than balanced by loss through repression of the impulse concerned. Some Freudians and neo-Freudians, indeed, lay special stress upon the value to mental health of facing and enduring, instead of repressing, the painful.*

* *Cf.* quotation from Jung, given later on p. 87.

Chapter III

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS THROUGH DREAMS

AS we have seen, the cures of various kinds of nervous disease, such as paralysis, morbid obsessions and unreasonable fears, have been found to follow the recall of forgotten experiences and the release of repressions. We are now to consider how these lost memories are revived, and in what way they must be re-associated if relief is to be given.

At first Freud brought about the recall of forgotten memories by putting his patients under the influence of hypnotism, and some of the neo-Freudians have made considerable use of hypnotism both as a means of discovery and of cure. The patient was hypnotised, and then told that he would recall all the events that caused his breakdown, and that he would live over again the forgotten experiences. At times, patients suffering from shell-shock would show, when hypnotised, extraordinary symptoms of emotion, crying out, trembling and giving other signs that they

were re-living intensely unpleasant experiences. In many cases recalls were of a much quieter type.

It has been found, however, that hypnosis is often unnecessary, and some raise objection to it. Freud and those who have been influenced by him have more generally used the now famous method of psycho-analyis, including the analysis of dreams.

Some psychologists lay great stress upon the importance of the emotional experience being re-lived in its full intensity (not necessarily under hypnotic influence), as an essential element in the cure. They argue that the re-living of the emotional experience is a means of working off excessive emotion—a kind of catharsis of the emotions.[1] Others maintain that, in many cases, a re-living of the emotional elements in the forgotten experience is not essential to cure; and that even when it takes place, it works rather as a help towards the recall of the forgotten memories than as a means of letting off repressed emotion. It seems probable that if, as is widely agreed, the recall of the forgotten experiences is the important factor, together with its re-association with the main

[1] See Symposium on *The Revival of Emotional Memories and its Therapeutic Value*, by Drs. Wm. Brown, C. S. Myers and W. McDougall: "British Journal of Psychology," Medical Section Vol. i. Part i.

current of the mind's life, then some recall of the emotional aspect is at least likely to be useful as making the revival more complete.

To return to the hypnotic method, it is interesting to note that the mere recall under hypnosis is inadequate: even the addition of an emotional revival under hypnosis does not seem to cure. The events must be remembered by the patient in ordinary waking life. This is secured by telling the patient that, after he wakes, he will recall the forgotten experiences. This necessity for the recall of the experience in normal waking life is suggestive in a further sense. It exemplifies clearly the idea to which all the relevant evidence points, namely, that the unifying of the mind (if possible) is the way of health. The ideas and feelings which occur under hypnotism are dissociated from the main current of the mind's activity: the forgotten ideas and impulses must be re-associated with their fellows. The splitting up of the mind means weakness. A comprehensive unified grasp of a difficult mental situation, full of the elements of conflict, is the healthy one. To see life steadily, and sanely, we must "see it whole."

We have now a new light upon the curious fact, shown in such mild cases as that of my friend who suffered from occasional paroxysms of fear,

that the mere retaining in memory of experiences which caused the trouble is not enough. The person concerned had never really forgotten the worries about sex in early life. But for any relief to come it was necessary for them to be directly connected in thought with the mental troubles from which the individual was suffering, and for him to assume a new attitude towards them, and to realise that these fears, originally attached to a single group of ideas, have "spread" in an absurd manner.*

Hypnotism is not, however, the usual method employed to revive lost memories. The method of psycho-analysis may proceed simply by talking over symptoms and their origins with the patient, trying to get him to probe his past for possible clues, and in some cases suggesting possible explanations—a method obviously full of danger if not used most cautiously and by a wise and skilled examiner.

Another method of inquiry is the method of "free association," in which the patient is encouraged, after relaxing body and mind, to let his ideas wander at will, and without any guidance from the doctor, and to note the thoughts to

* With the possibility that suggestion is really the means of cure in these cases of recall, I shall deal later. There is little doubt that in many cases it is a contributory cause.

which these wandering ideas lead. True, even these free wanderings are likely to be partially guided (though the patient may not be aware of it) by the knowledge of the situation in which the patient finds himself; but this influence of the thought of his ailment seems frequently to be just enough to lead to forgotten memories which are connected with the origin of the trouble, or to some unconscious conflict due to past circumstances.

The method of inquiry with which we shall deal especially in this chapter is the recording and analysing of dreams as a clue to lost memories and to unconscious and disturbing influences. In this analysis of dreams it is not the most obvious meaning of the dream (or lack of meaning) which is treated as significant. The most evident dream material, which is called the "manifest content" of the dream, is only used as a means of getting below the surface to what the manifest content symbolises and signifies—to what is called the "latent content." This is often best gained by taking the various elements of the dream separately, and by asking the patient to give the ideas and associations suggested to him by each element. This process sometimes puts an entirely different complexion upon the

The Analysis of Dreams

dream. Take, for example, the following dream: A patient of Dr. Ernest Jones, a man aged thirty-seven, dreamed that he was being attacked by a man who was armed with a number of sharp weapons; the assailant wore a dark moustache. The dreamer struggled and succeeded in inflicting a skin wound on his opponent's left hand. The name Charles seemed to be related to the man, though not so definitely as if it were his name. The man then changed into a fierce dog, which the dreamer succeeded in vanquishing by forcibly tearing his jaws apart so as to split his head in two.

The patient was astonished at his dream, being himself a most peaceable man. He was asked to say what was suggested by the name Charles. The word recalled several men of that name: first, a Dr. Charles Stuart, who was a dentist, and had a week before extracted a tooth from the mouth of the patient's wife, in his presence. The dentist, however, wore a beard, and the incident of tooth-extraction hardly seemed to account for the intense fear, the revengeful biting of the hand, and the tearing of the jaws of the dog. Dr. Jones therefore asked for other associations. The name Charles now recalled the Stuart kings, and then a former family doctor named Stuart Rankings, who had died when the patient was only nine years

old. Finally, there came to mind " a very painful scene, previously quite forgotten, in which the doctor had roughly extracted two teeth from the terror-stricken patient, after forcibly gagging his mouth open ; before he could accomplish this, the doctor had had his left hand badly bitten. The date of this occurrence could, from extrinsic evidence, be referred to the patient's fifth year." Further analysis made it clear that the dream thoughts were all connected with this, to the child, terrifying experience, and the dream itself was accompanied by intense fear. " The assailant in the dream," concludes Dr. Jones,[1] " was no other than the doctor whose treatment of the patient was nearly thirty years after his death thus fearfully avenged in the dream. The play on his name, Stuart Rankings (' Rank-kings ') which enabled him to become identified first with the Stuart King Charles " is quite characteristic of the play upon words so frequent in dreams.

The symbolising of the doctor by a dog is explained by the fact that he was a noted dog-fancier, and had given the patient a fine collie ; also, he led a very irregular life, and the patient recalled that he had often heard his father refer to him as a " gay dog."

[1] *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, p. 210.

It is specially noteworthy that the first natural interpretation of the dream, namely, that it was a mere recall of the recent tooth extraction by a man named Charles Stuart, would appear so plausible as to have satisfied the dreamer had he reflected unaided upon his dream.

Freud does, indeed, hold that some recent event usually serves to revive past experiences, which in some way can be associated with it, as was undoubtedly the case in the above dream. But the *prima facie* explanation of this dream would obviously fail to account for the biting of the left hand, the feeling that the man's name was not really Charles, the intense fear and the impulse of revenge; it could only treat these as absurd and irrelevant additions. But they are, at least, more intelligible as the resultants of the terrifying experience of the little boy and of the repressed feelings of anger and revenge which no doubt accompanied it.

Unfortunately, as is well known, dreams are very rapidly forgotten, and the most definitely remembered elements of a dream are not usually those of the greatest value in interpreting the dream. The significant elements are more frequently those which are elusive and which may only be recalled in the effort to analyse and inter-

pret the dream; and here there is always the danger that a tendency to fill in and to rationalise the dream may result in additions being made unknowingly by the person relating the dream. By many cases similar to that given above and to that of the young officer with claustrophobia, it is now clearly established that psycho-analysts, treating dreams in the way described, and especially being guided by the emotional element in the dream, have been able to recall long-lost memories, or to hit upon mental conflicts and repressions in the life of a patient of which he was not thoroughly aware himself, or which he did not realise were connected with his nervous trouble.

We shall refer to symbolism in dreams in the chapters on the psychology of dreams. Usually, the interpretation of symbols is at first received with utter scepticism. But there certainly seem to be some dreams which can be interpreted by means of the interpretation of symbols, and an experienced psycho-analyst can sometimes facilitate the interpretation of the dream by his knowledge of certain symbols fairly common in dreams, and of those peculiar characteristics of dream processes which we shall discuss later. The same symbol, however, does not invariably mean the same

Symbolism in Dreams

thing, but may have to be interpreted by the context.

We have seen that the analysis of a dream by reflection on the elements of the dream may result in the recall of forgotten experiences of an intensely emotional nature, the repression of which may be causing some nervous disorder, as was found in the case of the young officer suffering from claustrophobia. Dreams may also give a clue to mental conflicts due to present circumstances, or to recent events by no means forgotten.

Dreams and Mental Conflict

The repetition of a dream with a similar general significance, even in different settings, may be of special importance in diagnosis. Thus a woman, who is struggling day by day against a growing hatred towards her husband, may give the clue to the analyst by the record of her dreams in which her husband, or more probably some one or something which symbolises him, suffers injury or death.[1] Or a melancholic, who repeatedly dreams of his own death, may thus betray a (repressed) tendency to commit suicide. Such dreams have, in a few cases, been actually known to be followed by the patient's death under circumstances which suggested suicide. There lies herein one of the

[1] Compare the dream recorded on p. 100.

great difficulties of the medical adviser. For by interpreting a dream as signifying an impulse towards suicide he may actually be suggesting suicide to the patient, and the suggestion of suicide does seem to be capable of influencing some persons in certain moods. Against this danger, however, there is to be set the possibility that the psycho-analyst may be able to lay bare the obscure and perhaps forgotten cause of the morbid impulse towards suicide, to show its absurdity and to weaken its force or even expel it entirely from the mind.

The Forgetting of Dreams

A word may be added as to the ease with which dreams are forgotten. This has been attributed to the repression of the memory of those experiences which are being partially re-lived in the dream, albeit in a disguised form, the repression being partially released in sleep, but returning again in waking life. This seems likely to be one main explanation of the rapid fading of many dreams. It must, however, be remembered that the dream material is usually arranged in a way quite contrary to the normal logical connectedness of waking life, and the difficulty of remembering disconnected items is well known. Furthermore, while many dreams, even when recalled and

written down, are very readily forgotten, some persons seem to remember particular dreams in great detail, and striking dreams may be remembered for many years.

Individual differences in this respect will prepare us for the view I shall put forward in a later chapter that many dreams seem to be of no great significance as a clue to repressions.

Chapter IV

MENTAL ANALYSIS THROUGH ASSOCIATIONS

AN important method of mental analysis is the use of the word-association test [1]. This follows the method of a simple psychological experiment already familiar to psychologists. A number of words, disconnected in meaning—such as "poker," "friend," "street," "tomato," "strength,"—and so on, is read aloud to the patient. Each of these "stimulus" words will call up some associated idea in the hearer's mind. Usually, after a little practice, the length of time taken for one word to suggest another becomes a fairly regular period for a given individual, one to two seconds being quite a common interval. The interval between stimulus-word and response is called the reaction time. Sometimes, however, the stimulus-word takes a long time to produce another word; there is hesitation and even confusion, and the reaction time is very

Association Tests.

[1] First used by Jung for this purpose. See his *Analytical Psychology*, ch. ii.

long. Now prolonged associations may occur with a normal individual and may indicate nothing of special interest in the unconscious, but possibly a plethora of competing associations, or the recall of some emotional experience. The prolonged associations, however, happen frequently in the case of patients suffering from some mental trouble, and, on further inquiry, have often been found to be connected with forgotten experiences of a disturbing emotional nature, which have been the original cause of the mental trouble.

Let me give an example of the actual use of this method, in a case described by a British doctor in my hearing. A few details were altered to avoid any possible recognition. One of his patients, a woman, was suffering from severe nervous breakdown. No one had been able to discover the cause or a means of cure. The doctor submitted the patient to a long word-association test. To nearly all the words she gave responses of ordinary length, but two words gave very prolonged reactions. One was "ship," and the other was "luggage." Luggage, after a prolonged pause, gave "porter." The patient could not give any reason why these words gave such prolonged reactions. The doctor asked her to go home, and let her mind dwell upon them and see

what occurred. She came back a day or two afterwards in a state of great indignation. She accused the doctor of plotting to disturb her peace of mind, and she said had recalled, through the means he used, events which she had completely forgotten, and which had occurred before her marriage. It thus came to light that she had at that period passed through certain experiences which caused her intense mental distress. They were associated with an individual named *Porter*. The mental worry had been at its highest on her honeymoon journey on board *ship*. Upon that journey she had resolved to put these distressful thoughts out of her mind, and to try to forget them, and she had succeeded in suppressing entirely the memory of them. Nervous breakdown, however, had followed. By a lucky hit the doctor had included in his long lists of words two which were intimately connected with this experience, and had thus recalled it to her mind. It was possible for the mature mind of the woman to realise that she had really no cause for such intense mental trouble on account of the events referred to, and following this removal of the long repression of painful memories, the nervous debility gradually disappeared, and the patient was cured. The point of interest for us at present is that in this

case, as in many others, it was reflection upon the words and responses accompanying a prolonged reaction which led to the recall of associated memories which had been buried in the unconscious.[1]

The Cause of Prolonged Reactions

What is the cause of prolonged word reaction in such a case? Let us approach the problem by studying it in a simpler case, in which the processes involved are largely conscious, and in which the reasons for delayed reactions can be clearly seen. So sensitive are these reaction times, even to slight emotional disturbances, that I have been able to use the test in the following way. From a company of friends two subjects[2] (in this case women) were selected, and left the room together. I then wrote on a piece of paper the following sentences, purposely made somewhat startling, or even impertinent:

"Your hair is turning grey over the left temple."

"You will be married on New Year's Day."

[1] Prolonged reactions are by no means the only type of response which gives a clue to buried complexes; others are referred to only incidentally, however, as it is not the intention of the writer to explain the method in order that it may be used by the reader, but merely that the essential psychological basis should be understood.

[2] The term "subject" is commonly applied to a person upon whom a psychological experiment is carried out.

"Your husband's name will be George."

"You will die in Paris."

"There will be a gas explosion in your room at midnight."

This paper, folded up, I took to the two subjects. They were asked to toss up as to who should read it when I had left them. I had previously asserted that I could certainly tell which of them had read the paper, and, before the tests which followed, they were encouraged to do their utmost to conceal the truth from me, and they agreed to do so. Shortly after my return to the company, the first of the two subjects (in alphabetical order) was called in. I then read over to her, one at a time, a list of commonplace words, in the midst of which I had inserted certain "critical" words, occurring in the sentences on the paper, such as "grey," "temple," "die," "Paris," "midnight," "gas," etc. Each subject was instructed to say the first word that came into her head as quickly as possible when I read a word. I noted down each word given in response, and the length of time taken to respond, this being measured by a stop-watch hidden from the person tested. I have performed this experiment some dozen times, and once or twice I have been doubtful as to the "guilty" person, but in every case I have finally selected

her correctly, chiefly through prolonged reactions given to the critical words.

Let us consider what happens during the experiment in the mind of the person who has read the sentences previously. When one of the words is read out, *e.g.* "carpet," an association takes place, perhaps "room," in normal time; and so on for several words. Then a critical word included in the sentence is read out, *e.g.* "die." The first thought in the mind of the victim will very likely be "Paris," but to say Paris would betray that she had read the paper. So there is hesitation and confusion, and the reaction time is lengthened considerably through the necessity of finding another word, the mind hovering fixedly sometimes over the response word, which must not be given. In most instances, no doubt, it is the mere necessity of rejecting the first association that causes delay; but frequently the delay is obviously accentuated by confusion and mild excitement, which is, indeed, sometimes sufficiently great to cause the patient to blurt out after all the tell-tale word.

The emotional disturbance is still more probably the cause of delayed response in the following illustration of the use of the word-association test, in which it was used by Dr. Jung for the detection of crime.

In a certain hospital a theft was committed. A nurse complained of having been robbed of 70 francs. Circumstances made it almost certain that the theft was committed by one of three nurses. The pocket-book stolen was of dark-reddish leather, and contained a small silver chain, a stencil, and a receipt from a shop in Zurich. Apart from the plaintiff and the guilty person, only the head nurse knew the exact particulars of the theft. Dr. Jung, who performed the experiment, tested each of the three nurses with a long list of words, in the midst of which were inserted such words as "leather," "dark-reddish," "chain," "stencil." These words he calls the "critical" words. He says: "I first undertook the experiment with a friend of the head nurse, and judging by the circumstances, she appeared to be only slightly moved (we will call her Nurse A). The head nurse was next examined; she showed marked excitement, her pulse being 120 per minute immediately after the experiment. The last to be examined was the nurse who attended to the cleaning of the room in which the theft occurred. She was the most tranquil of the three; she displayed but little embarrassment, and only in the course of the experiment did it occur to her that she was sus-

pected of stealing, a fact which manifestly disturbed her towards the end of the experiment.

"The general impression from the examination spoke strongly against the head nurse. It seemed to me that she evinced a very 'suspicious,' or, I might almost say, 'impudent' countenance. With the definite idea of finding her the guilty one, I set about adding up the results."

The "critical" words were selected, and the average length of the reaction time of those words found in the case of each nurse. Then the average reaction time was found for the ordinary words, and it was found that the reaction time for the critical words was much longer than that for the ordinary words in the case of Nurse A, the friend of the head nurse, though the general excitement of the head nurse resulted in the reactions to the ordinary words being longer than were those of Nurse A. Dr. Jung made various other calculations which we need not discuss, except to say that they all pointed to Nurse A being the guilty one. The same evening Nurse A made a complete confession of the theft.

A number of other experiments of a similar type have been made. In such cases the "critical" word tends to rouse emotion in the guilty persons, and this emotional disturbance results in confusion

and delay. Even is there is no delay, the guilty person is likely to give himself away by giving in response a word which shows that he has special knowledge of the details of the crime.

If the slight emotional excitement, accruing in such a simple test as my own, described on page 59, is enough to increase reaction-times, we can imagine what would be the case when an actual criminal is being tested. Of course, an innocent man might be emotionally excited owing to being suspected, but provided he was ignorant of the special conditions of the crime his excitement would not affect the critical words more than the other words. If the criminal understands the nature of the test, he may try to avoid detection by preparing his response word before each word is given to him. He may thus avoid prolonged reactions to the critical words, but the irrevelance of most of his associations is likely to reveal itself. It is not suggested that this method will prove an adequate means of detecting crime in the absence of more definite evidence, but it would seem possible that it may in some cases afford valuable preliminary evidence, certainly more reliable psychologically than some of the absurd tests in which a witness has to pick out of a group of a dozen the man she thinks she saw near the scene

of the crime, when she has already seen a photograph of the suspected criminal, as has been the case in many trials for murder.

Now it is easy to understand the delayed reactions in these and similar experiments in which the causes of the delayed reactions, namely, the inhibiting feelings and ideas, are conscious. But what happens in the case of patients who have forgotten the original disturbing experiences, and are unconscious of any reasons for inhibiting the recall of the associated ideas? We may suppose that in some way the critical words rouse hidden emotions, through their connection with the forgotten ideas which have been repressed, and with the feelings attached to them. Sometimes, when patients are subjected to word-association tests, it is evident that there is a rousing of some emotional experience, vague and incomprehensible perhaps, but enough to cause that delay in the association process which suggests the buried "complex"—the word used to denote a group of repressed ideas with their associated feelings.

The Rousing of Repressed Memories

Or we may suppose that without any revival of an emotion, or even of any decided feeling, the critical word, A, tends to call up a repressed

idea or feeling, B, which is associated with it; but the repression continues to act, a " resistance " is set up—a resistance not deliberate like that in the first test described above, though once, perhaps, it was. A likely result of this resistance is that a third word, C, is called up, a side association of B or possibly a symbolic representation of B, as sometimes actually happens in these tests. Such a process is quite familiar to normal psychology, which is already acquainted with occurrences in which a series of associations, A—B—C, is finally contracted so that the intermediate B drops out, and the idea of the following C is recalled without the recall of B. It is, we may suppose, a sort of short-circuiting taking place in the brain processes. Hence, we may have in everyday life frequent cases like the following. We read some name or hear some place or object mentioned, and we experience at once a marked feeling of pleasure (or displeasure). We cannot understand why the name should cause us such a feeling of pleasure; we feel a " gap " in the mind; and, then, after an interval we remember the important link, the event which originally caused a similar feeling of pleasure, and with which the name is perhaps only remotely associated. Yet the hearing of the name was enough to rouse the memory of the event to

a kind of sub-conscious activity, and this was enough to produce the feeling; or perhaps the indirect linking of the name through the main original experience (now forgotten) to the original pleasant feeling was enough to tinge the name with the "feeling-tone" of the pleasing experience, and so to arouse the pleasure directly when the name was heard.

Whichever of these is the truer description, we have, in such examples as these, a common everyday example of the arousal of a feeling by a word only indirectly associated with that feeling in past experience, and when the main ideas connected with that past experience are not present in consciousness. In other words, we have a displacement of feeling or "affect" which the Freudians emphasise as a characteristic process in the unconscious, and which is similar to that transference of feeling from the real object to a symbol in dreams. We see then how a side association may arouse a disturbing emotion in the word test, and how this may cause hesitation or delay, and at times that feeling of a "gap" or "block" or something missing, which may be experienced by the subject undergoing the test.

Transference of Feeling

This example of everyday occurrence throws

light, not only on the delayed reactions in the word test experiments, but on the cases of abnormal emotionality or excessive feeling produced by relatively small causes. In the case of my friend who had occasional paroxysms of unreasonable fear (described in Chapter II), the word-test was used. One phrase read to the subject—" take care "—caused one of these intense emotions of fear. There was a prolonged delay in response; and then the subject said that the words suggested taking care of health, and later, anxieties in youth about health and its relation to certain matters of sex. This was one of the clues which led us to suppose that the origin of the unreasoning fear lay in the excessive anxieties of youth about sex. In this not very serious case the probable originating cause was readily recalled. In more serious cases, when the original cause is forgotten, we must suppose that an associated idea, through its connection with the buried memory, is able to rouse the emotion; or, perhaps, an emotion which had been mildly aroused may, in its turn, rouse to subconscious activity buried memories which again re-act upon the emotion with added violence.

McDougall's theory as to the physiology of the matter, is that, through being relatively

isolated, the complex works up more energy, the emotion centre working on the main brain processes correlated with the repressed memories, these again rousing to still greater activity the emotion centre, and so on. Normally, there would be a "drainage of energy" from the repressed-idea-brain-process to those processes correlated with ideas connected with it. The repression of the idea, however, results in its isolation.

The Isolation of Emotion

There are difficulties about this drainage theory; but I think we may apprehend the matter in a way which makes the psychological aspect more comprehensible by considering again some facts of normal mental life. Suppose we find out a surprising fact about a friend, something which indicates disloyalty. We are, at first, perhaps, much angered. Then our mind begins to turn to other ideas about him, which show his loyalty at other times. The new fact is indisputable, and we cannot help its influencing us; better memories of our friend may at first seem to accentuate the disloyalty by force of contrast, but the emotion of anger is not usually so strong when the new fact is seen in due proportion to other ideas about our friend, *i.e.* when the older memories have their due influence—perhaps McDougall would say

when there has been time for "drainage" of energy to take place. The isolated idea meant intense emotion; when forming only one item in a whole, it means less intense emotion. It should be noted that it is not necessary that the later ideas should prove the new fact incredible; we may still find it incontrovertible that on one occasion the friend was disloyal. It is evident, however, that the emotion will be still further reduced in intensity in those cases in which the later ideas do actually modify the first—if, for example, the remembrance of what our friend has been and done in the past makes us see the new act in a new light, and regard it as probably explicable by some fact not yet known to us. This suggests to us how things work in many of the cases in which a recovery of memory means recovery of mental health. In the recall of the worries about sex in boyhood a man may realise that they were exaggerated and foolish; the "complex" causing the trouble, which kept the emotion of fear in a highly sensitive and unstable condition, may be actually destroyed, when the idea on which it was based is seen to be false and groundless. Thus we see that some of the cures which appear at first extraordinary are not quite so incomprehensible in the light of orthodox psychology.

One word of caution may be added in reference to the word-test. As already suggested, prolonged reactions need not necessarily indicate some buried complex which needs resurrecting, and for the doctor to suggest possible associations to his patient (either deliberately or indirectly, *e.g.* by his theories being known to his patient) is firstly to vitiate the reliability of the line of associations, and, secondly, to run the risk of suggesting sources of trouble that did not previously exist. Finally, there are various other ways besides that of the prolonged reaction by which a buried complex may reveal itself in the tests, as for example, by the mere repetition of the stimulus word.

Mention must be made of a most interesting phenomenon, which occurs in many cases in which a patient is submitted to psycho-analysis. When some repressed emotional experience is revived and its original causes laid bare, the feeling is often transferred from its former object to the person analysing the patient; thus a hopeless passion for a friend of long ago, when brought to the surface again, issues in a warm affection for the physician; or the forgotten hatred of another may result in anger towards the physician. It is as though the feeling concerned, in the throes of its struggle for liberty, must first find some new object to which

it can attach itself, albeit more lightly. This new attachment may then be "explained away" again by the physician, leaving the patient free from the tyranny of his emotion.

Note on the Influence of Suggestion.

The view has been held that the supposed cures by release of repression and by re-association and re-education are really only elaborate cases of cures by suggestion. The enormous power of suggestion is now clearly established. As Dr. Rivers points out, among savages it is capable of producing death. Undoubtedly suggestion plays an important part in many cures. But it is noteworthy that even those neo-Freudians who confessedly make much use of suggestion, are convinced that suggestion is not the sole, or the chief, factor in most of their cures. In some cases cured only after the release of repressed memories, suggestion has been persistently tried before without success. Dr. Rivers points out that the proportion of cures by the psycho-analytic method in the army was greater among officers than among the rank and file, though the latter are undoubtedly more suggestible. It might, perhaps, be argued that because of their greater ability to understand the *rationale* of the method of cure the officers would be more apt to believe that a cure by this method was possible, and, therefore, that such a rational suggestion would have much more weight with them than the usual type of suggestion.

In this matter, however, great weight must be attached to the judgment of the medical men who, with this very question in mind, have constantly had the process of cure actually under observation. It must be admitted that at present it is impossible absolutely to disprove the assertion that many of the cures are largely due to suggestion; but in some cases a cure seems to have followed the revival of repressed memories when there were no grounds for sup-

posing that suggestion could be at work, when, for example, the patient did not know that the recall had anything to do with a method of cure.*

* *Cf.* the case described by Dr. Wm. Brown in *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, pp. 21, 22. On the general question see E. Jones, *Papers in Psycho-Analysis*, ch. xviii., and W. H. R. Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious*, p. 201.

Chapter V

BURIED COMPLEXES AND THE DISCIPLINE OF CHILDHOOD

WE have so far studied the effects, in certain cases, of the repression of past experiences, and of their recall to memory and their reconnection with the main stream of mental life; and also the methods by which these recalls from the supposed dead and buried past are obtained.

We will now look further into the general nature of these buried experiences.

We can divide them, roughly, into two classes: (1) memories of events, the unpleasantness of which gives a motive for forgetting them; and (2) impulses and desires which have conflicted with other desires incompatible with them, and which have been repressed for the sake of mental peace, or the repression of which has conduced to mental efficiency.

The two classes, however, are not entirely separated, for evidently a desire which leads to constant conflict and disappointment, and, so, to unpleasant feeling, will itself be apt to take on

a tinge of associated unpleasantness; the getting rid of the conflict is a means of getting rid of unhappiness, or at least of one element of it.

Repression in Infancy

It is one of the main tenets of Freudian psychology that the period of childhood is of special importance in its unconscious influence upon later life, and we have already considered several cases in which intense emotional experiences of childhood have been repressed. It is held that, to a large extent, the unconscious impulses are the remnants of desires and impulses repressed in childhood. The "filling" of the unconscious with such repressed impulses is supposed to take place especially in childhood, because the natural tendencies of children are held to be so bad from a social point of view that training is largely directed towards repressing such tendencies. One of Freud's most distinguished followers states that "without social pressure the individual would probably remain a selfish, jealous, impulsive, aggressive, dirty, immodest, cruel, egocentric and conceited animal, inconsiderate of the needs of others, and unmindful of the complicated social and ethical standards that go to make a civilised society."[1]

[1] Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, p. 124.

This statement is not lacking in vigour; but it gives no hint of the many natural good impulses of the child. The special characteristic of the young child is not selfishness, but impulsiveness. A mere infant may be as unselfish in his impulse as an adult, with a beautiful abandon indeed which is rare in later life. However, it is undoubtedly true that the child, in the face of social pressure, must repress many strong impulses, and these, it is supposed, become buried in the unconscious.

Childhood and Sex

Freud lays great stress upon the repression of sex impulses in early childhood; he believes that sex impulses and interests begin at a much earlier age than has usually been supposed. No doubt there is evidence that in certain cases this is so. But it is by no means clear that in the majority of children the interest in matters of sex, in the strict and narrow sense of the term, is any greater than their interest in a score of the other wonderful things of this world, in which all is to them so novel, unless and until the interest in sex is stimulated by an attitude of secrecy on the part of adults. It is important to recall however in fairness to Freud, that, as already hinted, he uses the word sex in a much wider sense than is usual. Especially is this

the case in reference to the sex life of very young children. In them, according to Freud, there appear, not, of course, the actual impulses towards reproduction, but what he calls partial impulses of sex, such as the craving for the enjoyment of sucking, the delight in kissing and other excitation, the impulses to cause or suffer pain (sadism and masochism). These become unified only later with the sex impulses proper.

Even with this very disputable modification of the term sex I am personally far from being convinced that even these partial impulses attain any great strength in the majority of children.

Nor does the fact that various impulses become later intimately associated with sex seem to me to prove that they are in any real sense sexual in their early appearance. Freud's view, indeed, seems to involve as a logical consequence that the senses of touch and smell are in essence sexual.

In any case it seems unnecessary to stress the significance of sex in early childhood, for the violent outburst of the sex instinct at adolescence and young manhood and womanhood will evidently afford good material and many occasions for repressions, and we have clear indications that

this period may be of profound influence in the mental life not only of abnormal but of normal individuals.

True, the evidence of the ill-effects of repression is based largely on the study of abnormal cases; and we have no evidence that either in these cases or in the case of more normal individuals a more lax attitude towards the moral code would have led to a saner mental life. The general trend of the new psychology, indeed, is in favour of calm rational control, of bringing all impulses within the unifying control of one aim or ideal. But it is also in favour of bringing to consciousness the vague and half-repressed impulses due to the great instincts. And the evils following on the emotional sex experiences of youth are far more likely to be due to the attempt at repressing from consciousness the awakening emotions of sex, and especially to the worry and anxiety due to ignorance about the beginnings of physiological sex processes, than to conscious control of sex under the influence of a moral ideal.

Repression and Control

There are grave dangers, however, in some of the unguarded assertions made on the question of sex repression. I recently heard a distinguished psycho-therapist say, to a large audience, "You

cannot repress a great instinct without its taking its revenge upon you."

In the investigation of cases by psycho-analysis, there is a further danger of the importance of sex being exaggerated as a cause of neurosis, if the patient has the slightest idea that the physician suspects that sex may be the cause, or if he knows the physician holds Freudian views. For it is a well-known psychological fact that when a word is presented to the mind the line of thought is partially determined by the ideas in the mind at the moment, and not merely by the stimulus word, or they may be suggested partly through the individual conducting the experiment without any desire on his part to do so. Thus, if a friend reads out the word "ball" to me, I am more likely to think of "dances," if I know he is a keen dancer, but I am more likely to think of "cricket" if I know he is a great cricketer. The idea of sex is still more likely to be reached, if, as Freud and some of his followers sometimes do, the physician is not content with the first association given by a word or by some symbol in a dream, but presses for the second, third and fourth associations.

Apart from questions of sex, it is clear that many strong impulses of the normal child in most

families must be checked. The impulses to shout and run about and fight are reproved by adults, and hence must often be repressed for fear of punishment. We have said that non-deliberate repression is thought to be characteristic of quite young children, and in mere infants, up to three years, repression is probably almost entirely such. The method of trial and elimination of error is followed. After three or four years they become more capable of reflecting upon possible consequences, and of choosing a course of action accordingly, though such careful choice is still relatively rare. What is probably also rare is a deliberate attempt to stifle a recurrent desire. We come, perhaps, nearer to deliberate repression in the attitude to unpleasant memories, yet even here repression may be largely non-deliberate. A little child of four or five, if one reminds him of the naughtiness of a previous day, will sometimes act as though the remarks were not heard, turning the topic of conversation immediately. It is dangerous to judge from external behaviour, but the signs in these cases suggest an aversion from the unpleasant memory which acts in an automatic way, not that the memory is deliberately put away.

Discipline and Repression

When a parent is excessively severe the range of

repressions in the child's mind is extended, and little scope may be left for the activity of any of the natural impulses of childhood. The severe father may thus acquire a complete domination over the child.

Later on, especially during adolescence, strong impulses from within impel the youth towards more independent action, and the assertion of his individuality. But the habit of repression set up by the father's severe discipline in early years may continue to dominate the youth's mind, and set up a conflict between his own impulses and the influence of the father. His own impulses are backed by the powerful instinct of self-assertion; hence, we may have a serious conflict between two powerful fundamental tendencies—that of self-assertion, and that of the fear of punishment or reproach.

Even when the father is not consciously thought of it is possible that his influence may continue to have a dominating effect upon the youth in spite of strong contrary impulses, in which case we may speak of a "father-complex." Jung gives cases in which the dominance of the father-complex was apparently the cause of the daughter's marriage being unhappy. There was contention between

The Father-Complex

the father and husband, and a struggle took place in the daughter's mind between the father's continued and extremely powerful influence and the wife's natural impulse to yield to the influence of her husband. In one case the daughter could not understand why her husband would not obey her father. The latter's authority was never called in question by her. Yet the unreasonableness of the situation did not strike her. Undoubtedly a similar conflict may be due to entirely conscious appreciation of the claims of a father on the one hand, and of a husband on the other; the peculiarity of this and some other cases seemed to lie in the excessive and continued deference to the father's wishes.[1]

This case was, of course, an abnormal one, the woman being distinctly a neurotic. But careful observation and inquiry among normal individuals, who examine their own character and the history of its development, suggest that a father (or mother) complex may have a profound and unsuspected influence on later life. Where this is a good influence the fact is not to be regretted, except in those exceptional cases in which the individual never develops any genuine strength of character, through constant dependence upon the parent, or upon the memory of a dead parent.

[1] *See* C. G. Jung, *Analytical Psychology*, p. 166.

To suggest that because we have many cases in which a parent retains a harmful and almost paralysing dominance over youth, we must therefore give young people all the rope they ask for, is completely unjustifiable on the evidence before us. We must recall again that the patients of the psycho-analysts are usually neurotic. We know that in many cases there may be great severity on the part of parents without any apparent nervous weakness in the child afterwards. The history of Puritanism could probably supply thousands of such cases; though in the possibly numerous cases in which ill-effects have ensued from extreme severity, the cause of those ill-effects will not have been recognised.

Furthermore, the physical and mental health of the child is not the sole aim we must keep in view. It may be that it would be worth while to sacrifice this to some extent if necessary for the sake of moral training and a conformity to what is found needful for the well-being of society as a whole.

Having said this, however, we must return to our proviso—when the influence of the parent is good. Unhappily, it is not always good, even when well-intentioned. There is reason to believe that irritability and violent temper in the parent

may have lasting ill-effects on some children. Within my own limited experience I have come across instances which suggest that the parent complex, even the influence of those who would be reckoned good fathers and mothers, may, in some minor matters, be excessive. In one case that came under my notice, a man experienced occasionally, under circumstances in which a slight conflict threatened between himself and others (as, for example, in business affairs), a feeling of anxiety like that of an accusing conscience, even when the strictest examination showed not the slightest grounds for it. This subject showed the influence of the father complex most clearly in the word-association test; several long reactions, which he found it impossible to explain, led back suddenly to the fear of the father, especially in reference to certain events in which the youth had been quite innocent. The fear of the father at this period had not been entirely forgotten, but so far as he knew it had not been thought of for many years. I may add that this discovery was made before I had heard of, or read of, the theory as to the father complex, so that suggestion on my part seems to be ruled out. Within a few weeks of the discovery anxieties of the kind mentioned ceased to trouble the man.

This same individual seemed to reveal the influence of the father complex in another and rather amusing way. He had an absurd irritability when teased about his unusual fondness for certain delicacies. I have seen him become very angry about it. The man himself, in calmer moments, would seek to justify it. I set him thinking along Freudian lines, and his interest was intense when he recalled that his father, who had been a severe and dominating parent, had frequently criticised him, even when a young man, for wanting these particular delicacies, which the father himself did not happen to like. After this explanation the teasing was not resented in the slightest, but only caused mild amusement.

Possibly excessive sensitiveness to criticism may in some cases be due chiefly to earlier criticism by the parent, which the child felt to be unjust. A child has to repress even his righteous indignation, and so a sensitive centre may be set up, which is only too liable to be roused by circumstances resembling its original cause. Or, through being constantly snubbed, a permanent conviction of his own marked inferiority may be established in a child, which may cling to him when its cause is forgotten.

With due allowance for the abnormality of many cases given in evidence, we do seem to have in the doctrine of the father complex an additional factor which must be taken into account in balancing the gains and losses of strict discipline; and at least we have a further reason for giving as much freedom as possible to strong, youthful impulses, which are innocent and harmless, though they may be disturbing to the comfort and quiet of older folk.

Both Freudians and some neo-Freudians hold that excessive petting, as well as excessive severity, may set up an undue dominance of the father or mother over the child's personality; so that we may have a characteristic "mother-complex."[1] Devotion towards the mother, even when her influence is no longer recognised as such, may conflict with the widening claims of life as the youth grows to manhood. Or the continued reliance on or craving for the mother's affection may be a source of weakness in facing realities. According to this view, when the neurotic complains that the world does not understand or appreciate him he is really crying for his mother. The full carrying out of life's

The Mother-Complex

[1] *Cf.* Jung, *Analytic Psychology*, and Crichton Miller's chapter on "The Mother Complex," in *Functional Nerve Disease.*

demands, or the realisation of the highest self, may need the abandonment of a too dominant parental influence; which throws a new light upon the words, "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, he cannot be my disciple."

One of the most suggestive parts of Jung's work is his psychological exposition of the view—already a familiar theme in literature—that the shirking of a great choice, or the absence of a dominant aim in life, may be the source of mental as well as of moral weakness. We have not to go to abnormal examples to find cases in which the abandonment of the ideals of youth has been followed by mental as well as moral lassitude.

Jung writes: "We do not help the neurotic patient by freeing him from the demand made by civilisation; we can only help him by inducing him to take an active part in the strenuous task of carrying on the development of civilisation. The suffering which he undergoes in performing this duty takes the place of his neurosis. But, whereas the neurosis and the complaints that accompany it are never followed by the delicious feeling of good work well done, of duty fearlessly performed, the suffering that comes from useful work, and from victory over real difficulties,

brings with it those moments of peace and satisfaction which give the human being the priceless feeling that he has really lived his life."[1]

Note on Father and Mother Complexes.

The terms Father Complex and Mother Complex in the sense used in this chapter are apt to be taken as implying that the father is usually the strict disciplinarian in the home, and that all or nearly all the petting is done by the mother; but this is an assumption which it is unsafe to make. To test the truth of it, I put the following question to two classes of students and teachers: "Who was the more severe disciplinarian in your own case?" The results were as follows, excluding a few cases in which no opinion was expressed one way or the other:

	Number of cases in which the more severe disciplinarian was	
	The Father.	The Mother.
Boys ...	27	18
Girls ...	7	25

It will be seen that so far as girls were concerned the mother was far more frequently the chief disciplinarian, and even in the case of the boys the father was not invariably the more severe disciplinarian.

The terms Father Complex and Mother Complex are useful, however, simply as indicating types of complexes. The two possible senses of the term Father Complex should also be noted: the complex due to excessively severe or unjust discipline, and the complex revealing continual dominance of the father (as illustrated on page 82) which need not necessarily be due to severe discipline but may even be due to indulgence. In both senses of the term then, what is commonly called a "Father Complex" may in individual cases really be a "Mother Complex."

[1] Jung, *Analytical Psychology*, p. 224.

Chapter VI

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DREAMS

WE have already seen that a repressed impulse or complex may find a way out for itself in some disguised form. For example, we may recall the woman who was jilted by the shoemaker, and who constantly made movements similar to those involved in cobbling shoes ; or the father complex that revealed itself through excessive irritability in small matters.

The theory that dreams are a means by which repressed wishes are fulfilled is the part of Freud's work which has perhaps attracted most attention ; and, as we have seen, the analysis of dreams has actually led to the discovery of lost memories, and of the existence of severe mental conflict and repressions. Unfortunately, Freud allows himself to make very sweeping generalisations in reference to dreams. Some of these generalisations, it is true, appear much more reasonable when Freud's view is thoroughly considered. For example, at

first we are astonished at Freud's assertion that "the dream never deals with the trivial," for dreams constantly appear to be concerned with most trivial affairs. Now this is true of what is obvious in the dream, which Freud calls the "manifest content." He claims, however, that it has a deeper meaning, a latent content which is not trivial. In some dreams, as we have already seen, this does seem to be the case; deeper significance can be found through analysis by getting associations or interpreting symbols. But we have no proof that all dreams are thus significant, or that the unconscious is always expressing itself in the dream. And, indeed, we shall see later that even the latent content of some dreams, their significance when the symbols and associations are interpreted, is still somewhat trivial.

Again, Freud says that *all* dreams have ultimately a sexual significance; yet some of the dreams which he himself gives are concerned with quite other things.

He asserts that dreams are ultimately traceable, in part, at least, to the experiences of childhood, which again seems too sweeping, though certainly the very great influence which early experiences may have upon the mental life of adults does seem

to betray itself occasionally in their dreams. Finally, Freud, in his book, "Traumdeutung," made the assertion that all dreams are the fulfilment of wishes more or less repressed, except in the case of some dreams of infants. This is not so absurd as it seems at first, because, in the first place a careful analysis of some dreams shows their significance to be quite different from what we at first imagine; and it is still more credible if we hold, with Freud, that the unconscious indulges in many "wishes" which we should indignantly repudiate as not being genuine or even possible wishes of our own. Dreams, which are the obvious fulfilment of wishes, are characterised as infantile, being typical of the dreams of childhood, though occurring also in adults. There is, I think, no doubt that some dreams cannot be explained as the obvious or disguised fulfilment of either repressed or unrepressed wishes, and Freud even gives some examples himself in the "Traumdeutung."![1]

In view of these extreme generalisations, it is curious to find Freud writing in his introductory chapter that in the analysis of the dream life we

[1] More recently Freud has greatly modified the view that *all* dreams are the fulfilment of repressed wishes, and that all dreams are sexual in origin. See his *Lectures on Psycho-Analysis.*

are reminded at every step that it is inadmissible to frame general rules without qualifying these by such terms as " frequently," " as a rule," " in most cases."

Perhaps we may best interpret Freud's doctrine of dreams by saying that, just as in day-dreams we let the mind wander and imagine our wishes come true, so in our actual dreams the repressed wishes in the unconscious self, of which we may be quite unaware, have free play. These are normally kept in check in waking life by what Freud calls the " censor "—an aspect of mental activity whose work includes that of the conscience, and also of a judgment of value, inhibiting the unpleasant. In sleep, the censorship is supposed to be relaxed, and the repressed impulses and thoughts have their opportunity; and yet it is not entirely relaxed, so that even in sleep, repressed wishes may have to find their satisfaction in some disguised form, often through mysterious symbols.

The Censor

Freud based this theory of dreams on the analysis of large numbers of the dreams of his patients and of others, and on the inter-connections between these dreams and important elements of their waking life; and this view of dreams has been generally acclaimed as one of the most

original parts of Freud's work. It is, however, anticipated in a striking way in Plato's "Republic." Freud refers[1] to Plato's view that the virtuous man "contents himself with dreaming that which the wicked man does in actual life," but I believe he nowhere shows a knowledge of the following passage in the "Republic"[2]: "Some of the unnecessary pleasures and appetites are, if I mistake not, unlawful; and these would appear to form an original part of every man; though, in the case of some persons, under the correction of the laws and the higher appetites aided by reason, they either wholly disappear, or only a few weak ones remain; while in the case of others, they continue strong and numerous.

Plato's View of Dreams

"And pray, what are the appetites to which you refer?

"I refer to those appetites which bestir themselves in sleep; when, during the slumbers of that other part of the soul, which is rational and tamed and master of the former, the wild animal part, sated with meat and drink, becomes rampant, and, pushing sleep away, endeavours to set out after the gratification of its own proper character.

[1] *Traumdeutung*, English translation, p. 493.

[2] *Republic*, 571.

You know that in such moments there is nothing that it dares not do, released and delivered as it is from any sense of shame and reflection."

Possibly some of the ridicule poured upon Freud's theory of dreams would have been softened if it had been realised that the germ of several aspects of the Freudian view of dreams, including the characteristic doctrine of the censor, was to be found in Plato. The Freudian view becomes at once distinctly more respectable.

Let us examine now Freud's theory of dreams and try to see what is clearly proved, and what is a matter of speculation.

The Release of Repression in Dreams

There is one fact that is clearly established, namely, that deliberate attempts at repression of unpleasant memories may, at least in patients with nervous trouble, result in their finding an outlet in dreams, in an intensified form. The following case recorded by Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, may serve as an example[1]:

During the war an officer passed through the terrible experience of seeing his friend blown to pieces. This experience had become an obsession with him, and threatened to cause serious mental trouble.

[1] See paper on *Repression of War Experiences* in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 1918, Vol. xi. Republished in *Instinct and the Unconscious.*

Both doctors and friends whom he had consulted had simply advised him to put these disturbing ideas out of his head, and to engage his attention with other things. He had steadfastly attempted to follow this advice, but the result was that the ideas carefully repressed during the day came back with all the greater vigour during the night, and caused very unpleasant dreams. He had nightmares in which his friend appeared as he had seen him mangled in the field. Dr. Rivers tried to put the experience in a new light. He pointed out to the patient that the manner of his friend's death ensured, at least, that he had an instantaneous and painless passing—instead of one involving prolonged pain, as might have happened. Thus the officer was enabled to let his mind dwell on the event during the daytime. The result was that his nightmares shortly disappeared. Similarly a widow who often had distressing dreams of her dead husband ceased entirely to have them, when, at my suggestion, she ceased to repress all thoughts of him during the day, as her doctor had advised.

Many dreams are now on record which can be, partially at least, interpreted as the satisfying of impulses repressed to some degree. But many dreams seem hardly capable of such interpretation. It is quite likely that here, again, we may find a

great difference between the frequency and insistence of such dreams in normal persons and in patients suffering from nervous disorder.

Freud states that dreams of children especially are merely the fulfilment of unattained wishes. I have made a record, covering several months, of the dreams related to me with evident sincerity by one of my boys between the ages of five and six. That they were genuine dreams and not "make ups," I further convinced myself by asking him occasionally to tell me stories of his own invention. The difference between these and the dreams was most striking, the dreams being much more interesting. Many of the dreams were obvious fulfilment of childish wishes; but in a very considerable proportion of cases they were dreams of fears, of horses trampling near him on the pavement, of bears chasing him, and so on. Wider studies have shown that such fear-dreams are very common among young children.[1]

Freud's interpretation of fear-dreams as the expression of anxieties connected with sex impulses had already, on general grounds, seemed to me most unsatisfactory, and it appears still more inadequate, in view of the appearance of so many fear-dreams at a very early age and at a period

[1] *Cf.* C. W. Kimmins, *Children's Dreams*.

when Freud himself holds that dreams are interpretable on the basis of their manifest content.[1]

Fear Dreams

Fear-dreams and nightmares form a special problem for the new psychology. I would suggest that in dreaming of the night, as in the imaginations of the day, our fancies may run upon the unpleasant as well as on the pleasant, with the added difference that in sleep that rational control which would refuse to dwell painfully on imaginary evils is either absent altogether or is reduced to a minimum. In some moods, even of waking consciousness, thoughts of possible trouble and disaster may fascinate us. Perhaps a profounder psychology might even say that these thoughts of evil are due to a species of sub-conscious craving, for there seems to be inherent in man some strange attraction towards the fearful. The tendency to fear demands some stimulus, as is shown in the love for dangerous mountain climbing by adults, or for blood-curdling novelettes or melodrama. In children it is shown by their love for many kinds of adventures. In little children, especially, it is evinced for example

[1] Mr. Flugel comments on this paragraph: "Here I am very much inclined to differ from you. I feel that evidence both from observation of children and from analysis of adults points pretty clearly to sexual origin of these fears, and that if Freud holds that these dreams are interpretable on the basis of their manifest content, it is here that he is wrong."

by their fearsome delight when grown-ups will play at lions, even to a point at which the child cries with fright, though only to demand the game over again a moment later. Thus, in a sense, it may be said that our fear-dreams may be fulfilling some sub-conscious primitive craving not satisfied in waking life. But they sometimes seem to overdo it ![1]

With these brief critical comments, I will proceed to give some examples of dreams which seem to fit in with the Freudian theory, and which will illustrate at the same time several tricks of the so-called dream work. One of these is condensation; in a dream several desires may be blended and satisfied in one event, or several personalities may be blended in one. Symbolism is another characteristic of dreams, and helps to conceal from the self the real significance of the dream.

Condensation in Dreams

A delightful illustration of the blending and satisfying of two desires is shown in the following dream recorded by Freud.

[1] The view that dreams may serve as *compensations* for impulses not satisfied in waking life, seems to gain some support from Dr. Kimmins' inquiry upon the dreams of children. Thus industrial school children recorded a greater proportion of happy dreams than did children in elementary or secondary schools; poor children dream more about food and presents than do children who are better off; and deaf children have dreams about conversations much more frequently than do their schoolfellows who can hear.

A medical student woke up one morning and reflected discontentedly that he had to get up at once from his comfortable bed and hurry to the hospital. He was, however, so loth to leave his bed that he lingered on and fell asleep again. While asleep he had a dream. He dreamt that he was himself lying in bed as a patient, in the hospital where he was due, with his name-chart over his head. Thus did the dream solve the difficulty of fulfilling both his wishes at once—to be in bed and to be in the hospital !

" The censor," as already indicated, is the term given to that mental activity which results in the repression in normal waking life of wishes and tendencies of which we should not approve, or which we should even find abhorrent, or which we repress for the sake of mental peace. Freud's theory is that in dreams this censorship is relaxed, and hence in many dreams we behave in a manner which we should certainly never imitate in waking life, for example appearing in public insufficiently clad. The censor, however, is not quite off his guard even during sleep, and, consequently many of the wishes fulfilled in dreams are fulfilled in a way which is very much disguised, for there are limits to what Mrs. Grundy would approve even in our dreams. The

Distortion in Dreams

following dream, recorded by Dr. Ernest Jones, is supposed to illustrate this activity of the censor in sleep.

"A patient, a woman of thirty-seven, dreamed that she was sitting in a grand-stand, as though to watch some spectacle. A military band approached, playing a gay martial air. It was at the head of a funeral, which seemed to be that of Mr. X. The casket rested on a draped gun-carriage. She had a lively feeling of astonishment at the absurdity of making such an ado about the death of so insignificant a person. Behind followed the dead man's brother and one of his sisters, and behind them his two other sisters. They were all incongruously dressed in a bright grey check. The brother advanced 'like a savage,' dancing and waving his arms. On his back was a yucca-tree with a number of young blossoms."

This apparently absurd dream is explained as follows: the facts were related to Dr. Jones by the patient under considerable emotion. The lady had been engaged to be married to a brother of Mr. X. Her parents, however, manœuvred to bring about a misunderstanding between them, and encouraged her in a fit of pique to marry her present husband, to her enduring regret. His drinking habits had completely alienated any wifely

feeling she had for him. Yet even in a dream she could not see with indifference an explicit representation of the death of her husband. But he is admirably represented by Mr. X for several reasons. In the first place, their careers had been very similar. Both men had promised much when they were young, but the hopes their friends had built on them had not been fulfilled. Mr. X had ruined his health and career by addiction to morphia, her husband by alcohol. The military funeral also indicated her husband, for he was an officer in the Volunteers, while Mr. X had no connection with the Army. The contempt she had for her husband accounts for her astonishment in the dream for making such a fuss about the death of so insignificant a person. The gaiety shown also by her former lover at the funeral is explained if the funeral is really that of her husband and not that of his own brother, as is likewise the fact that no wife of Mr. X appeared at the funeral, although he was married. The dancing like a savage reminded the patient of native ceremonies she had seen, particularly marriage ceremonies. The yucca-tree, writes Dr. Jones, "proved, on analysis, to be a phallic symbol, and the young blossoms represented offspring. The patient bitterly regrets never having had any children, a

circumstance she attributes to her husband's vices." In the dream, therefore, her husband dies unregretted, and the marriage with her former lover is suggested.[1] The reading of only a few examples of such distortion and symbolism in dreams is, no doubt, apt to leave the reader sceptical. We shall refer again to the interpretation of symbols, but it is only the study of many cases in which such interpretation puts meaning into an otherwise nonsensical dream, which can have the full cumulative effect. We may here, at least, recall the fact that dreams, interpreted as Dr. Jones interprets the one just given, have been successfully used in the attempts to discover the hidden conflicts in the minds of patients.

Such dreams, however, are usually the dreams of neurotics. To what extent, and in what ways, are Freud's ideas about dreams true for more normal individuals? To this question we shall turn in the next chapter, in which we shall seek a somewhat wider psychological interpretation of dreams.

[1] *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, p. 198.

Chapter VII

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DREAMS—(*continued*)

A STUDY of the dreams of normal persons suggests that the censor in dreams is a very shadowy person. The mere use of symbols does not prove the presence of a censorship in any serious sense, though they may indicate slight repression, or, at least, aversions. The following dream is typical of a number which illustrate this, and, at the same time, it exemplifies other ways of the dream work.

I dreamt that I was in my garden and that Professor X was sitting with me. He was engaged in marking some essays written by my students upon the subject " Christ as the Ideal of Education." While he was doing this, I gathered some grapes from a garden frame and offered them to him, though they were much over-ripe. At this moment a window opened in a large barrack-like building opposite, and the wife of Professor Y appeared and invited me and my wife to come and have dinner with them.

This apparently absurd dream may be interpreted as follows. A few days before I had discovered to my annoyance that there were a number of essays written by students which I had forgotten to correct during the holidays, and the term was now beginning. The subject of the essay was "Aims and Ideals of Education." On the Sunday previous I had discussed with Professor X an early philosophical essay of mine, in which I had referred to a certain view as to the person of Christ as the orthodox one. Professor X, however, thought this view not orthodox but a heresy, to which I had replied that a distinguished theologian, who had read my essay in manuscript, had said that this view was the orthodox one, and that another view which I had first described in the manuscript as orthodox was " heresy." As I was still inclined to my original view, and as Professor X seemed to support that view, I expressed a wish that Professor X should see this essay. In the dream the theological essay and the educational essay, which I very much wished to have marked, are combined, in title at least, and Professor X, in reading the essay, is also doing my work by marking my students' papers on " Christ as the Ideal of Education."

But what about the grapes? Professor X

had given me hospitality when I visited the city before my appointment to the University Chair. When I had settled in my new home I had frequently tried to arrange a dinner to which he could be invited, but owing to the time taken to settle into the house, and, subsequently, to long illness in the house, this had been delayed. In the dream I offered refreshments to Professor X in the form of grapes which were over-ripe—symbolic of the long overdue hospitality !

We had also been delayed in returning the hospitality of Professor and Mrs. Y for the same reason. In the dream, by a delightful inversion, Mrs. Y settles this little trouble by inviting us to dinner again, instead of our inviting them. I have had a number of examples of the same type among dreams of my own and of other persons, which indicate that symbolism may be used when there is no very serious reason for concealment. Yet I must admit in every case, I think, there has been at least some unpleasant aspect which may have led to a slight non-deliberate repression. A dream of mine which may have resulted from a slight repression also illustrates the tendency of some dreams to take the simple form of a cartoon and the tendency towards abbreviation. Some days before the Armistice I felt, as I

believe many did in this country, some slight anxiety lest the internal collapse of Germany should be even too complete, lest there should be no one with sufficiently recognised authority to make a peace, and lest the over-running of the whole Empire by Allied troops should prove necessary. No doubt this fear was once or twice rejected as improbable, or repressed as an unnecessary anticipation of difficulties. The night before the Armistice was signed I dreamt that I saw a newspaper placard as follows: PEACE—LUDORF. Thus was announced in cartoon form, and with an abbreviation of the full name, Ludendorf, a peace arranged by the former Head of the Army Council, still apparently in power and able to make peace with full authority.

I do not think that the repression in this case can have been at all forceful, as the anxiety itself was not great. Certainly, in the following dream, the repression can only have been of the mildest. This dream will serve also to introduce the reader to Freud's idea that the dream is often a means not of disturbing sleep but of guarding it. This is supposed to happen particularly when some disturbing sensation, which might arouse us to a sense of reality about us, is taken by the dream and woven

The Dream as the Guardian of Sleep

into its substance, thus preserving the detachment from the outer world.

The dream I refer to was as follows. When I was staying at a seaside hotel I dreamt that I heard the sea water rushing up a supply pipe from the sea for the sea-water baths in the hotel, and striking the end of the tank with a tremendous thud. This continued a number of times. Shortly afterwards, I woke up and realised that the noise of which I had been dreaming was in reality the occasional rattling of the bedroom door caused by the high wind. The rattling of a door usually wakes me at once, and I cannot sleep until I have secured it. The interesting point is that in the dream the door rattling was blended to the dream in which an unfulfilled wish was realised. I had inquired the day before if one could obtain the usual sea-water baths, but was told that the water supply was not working. I had looked at the great pipe leading from the sea towards the hotel with regret. In the dream the water supply is working most efficiently—too efficiently indeed. My wish is fulfilled and the disturbing noise reinterpreted. But in this case the dream interpretation did not succeed in preserving sleep for very long.

Most of the dreams which we have discussed

seem to fit in with the supposition that thoughts and desires which have been cut off, perhaps by repression, may tend to run on in a modified form in dreams. But there is another supposition which may explain some dreams, and which would bring them into relationship with the psychology of waking life. It is that the mere *interruption* of a mental process may result in its tendency to complete itself in dreams, as it often does in waking life. If we are engaged in thinking out a practical problem and we are interrupted by a telephone call or by the necessity of making up the fire, the problem thoughts tend to recur when the interruption is over. Domestic worries, driven out of a man's mind by business at his office, recur as he goes out to lunch. This tendency with which we are already familiar in waking life, makes it not surprising if some dreams are the completion of interrupted mental processes, processes which have not fulfilled their purpose with satisfaction. And, again, as every mental process has its conational, *i.e.* striving, desiring aspect, many dreams will appear as the completion, partial at least, of unfulfilled conations. If the uncompleted processes have been strongly impulsive and have had to be repressed, they may be the more insistent

Dreams as Completions

when repression is removed, that is, when the higher controlling centres are at rest. Or when repression continues to act against the unpleasant ideas or undesirable impulse, a side track may be discovered, which has never consciously been thought of in connection with the repressed idea, and so a way to consciousness is reached by an odd fantastic association or symbol which completely puzzles the dreamer. This is really no more surprising, however, than the fact that by letting our waking thoughts wander at will, we may get odd associations, which have never occurred before, coincidences of ideas, between which we recognise only the flimsiest bond, if any. It is the illusion of reality and the intensity of feeling accompanying such odd conjunctions of ideas in dreams which differentiate them from waking reveries, and point to their being connected with fundamental impulses and emotions.

No doubt the curious symbols and cross associations may be partially explained by the unequal degrees of resting of the various portions of the brain. As regards symbolism, however, we have one point of extraordinary interest, which suggests again a rising into activity during sleep of some elements of the mind deep-rooted in the ancestral history of

Symbols and Primitive Thoughts

the race. I refer to the fact that some symbols used in dreams seem not only to be common to the dreams of many people, even people of different nationalities, but also to have some connection with the symbolism of the primitive myths and primitive types of thought.

For example, the idea of father and mother is often apparently symbolised in dreams by that of king or queen, and Dr. Ernest Jones points out that the word king is ultimately derived from the Sanskrit root gan, to beget: ganaka was the Sanskrit for father, and occurs also in the Vedas as the name of a well-known king. The word queen comes from the Sanskrit "gain," which means "mother." The idea of teeth in dreams is sometimes related symbolically to the thought of the birth of children, a connection which is never found in waking consciousness. In the Song of Songs we read: "Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them."[1] I was able recently to get the clue to the significance of a friend's dream through this interpretation of the symbol of teeth.

The suggestion is, that in the unconscious self there are buried not only relics of all our childish

[1] Quoted in *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, p. 143.

experiences, and not only those great instincts which are the heritage of all, but the faint traces of more detailed and more variable far-back experiences of the race, and that this is why we find so much resemblance between primitive imaginings, dreams, and some of the imaginative experiences of early childhood. Or we may, at least, trace the resemblance between dreams and primitive myths to the fact that in both the mental mechanism at work is of an infantile nature, each being characterised, for example, by dramatisation, symbolism and vivid imagery.[1]

As we have seen, the dominant Freudian conception of the dream (so far as the dream has meaning at all), is that of a means of experiencing in fancy the fulfilment of repressed wishes, now buried in the unconscious. We have added the further idea that the dream may see the completion of any mental process begun in waking life, but interrupted before coming to a satisfactory conclusion, or perhaps more particularly before being brought into unified relation with other impulses and thoughts, but without any further kind of repression ; and the completion takes place through the energy, frustrated for the time, of that mental process itself.

[1] *See* W. H. R. Rivers' *Dreams and Primitive Culture.*

The tendency in the Freudian view is to emphasise the dream as a means of fulfilling childish impulses repressed through training and social convention. The formula I have suggested gives it a wider scope, and makes way for Jung's conception of the significance of dreams for present and future life. They may, he believes, indicate the struggling upwards in the self of partially neglected impulses of a higher order. But here, again, it does not seem that any actual repression, conscious or unconscious, is a necessary condition for the causing of the dream. The dream may be simply the ideal completion, or fuller carrying out, of processes begun and still active in waking consciousness.

Higher Impulses in Dreams

Of this kind may be such dreams as that of an adolescent boy, in whom profound religious feelings were stirring, and who, at a critical juncture of his life, had an intensely vivid dream of the figure of Christ, illuminated by a light which seemed to shine from Heaven. This dream seems to have expressed the craving and struggling in his mind for a " clearer vision " of Christ. The records in his diary, which he showed me, suggest that at the time he was earnestly desiring a more complete religious life, and the dream not only satisfied

some of his religious cravings, but had a decided effect upon his subsequent career.

In some such way dreams may on rare occasions have a decided influence on the life of a man through emphasising the higher impulses calling for satisfaction. Of such a type would seem to be the famous dream of the cowherd poet Cædmon. "Though well advanced in years, Cædmon had learnt nothing of the art of verse, the alliterative jingle so common among his fellows, wherefore, being sometimes at feasts, when all agreed for glee's sake to sing in turn, he no sooner saw the harp coming towards him than he rose from the board and turned homewards. Once, when he had done thus, and gone from the feast to the stable, where he had that night charge of the cattle, there appeared to him in his sleep one who said, greeting him by name, 'Sing, Cædmon, some song to me.' 'I cannot sing,' he answered; 'for this cause left I the feast and came hither.' He who talked with him answered, 'However that be, you shall sing to me.' 'What shall I sing?' rejoined Cædmon. 'The beginning of created things,' replied He. In the morning the cowherd stood before Hilda and told his dream. Abbess and brethren alike concluded 'that heavenly Grace had been conferred on him by the Lord.' They translated for

Cædmon a passage in Holy Writ, 'bidding him, if he could, put the same into verse.' The next morning he gave it them composed in excellent verse, whereon the abbess, understanding the divine grace in the man, bade him quit the secular habit and take on him the monastic life."[1]

Theoretically, it seems reasonable to suppose that if dreams arise through primitive impulses being repressed because they are too bad, dreams might also arise from higher impulses and thoughts repressed because they are too ideal or make too great a claim upon us. Such repressions, no doubt, occur in most persons; but they hardly seem to have any influence on many dreams—a further suggestion as to the primitive nature of our dream life, its intimate association with marked characteristics of earlier rather than later stages in our mental development.

To sum up, it seems to the writer that we cannot, in the present state of knowledge, regard most dreams as of great significance for the understanding of normal individuals, useful as they undoubtedly are in the interpretation of some cases of nervous disease. Freud himself calls attention to the fact that his study of dreams is almost entirely based upon the dreams of neurotics.

[1] J. R. Green, *History of the English People*, p. 26.

Evidence is slowly accumulating that occasionally the dreams of a " normal " individual may be very illuminating. We have not, however, adequate evidence that dreams have any biological function of appreciable importance, and if that is so it is not surprising that the mechanism of the dream is irregular and incomplete. Much of the dream activity is probably due to chance associations of parts of the brain still partially active, and so many dreams may be of no real significance.

Yet the new study of dreams affords us enough evidence that in many cases of nervous disease and mental disturbance, and occasionally in normal individuals, the dream may give a clue to many activities still surging in the unconscious, and to their mode of influencing the waking consciousness. While the striking resemblance between some parts of dreams to myths and primitive symbols, and the uprising in dreams of deep-laid impulses, tamed and controlled in waking life, suggests that, in a fuller sense than hitherto understood, so far as the subconscious self is concerned we are, indeed, " Such stuff as dreams are made of."

Chapter VIII

THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

I—Sublimation and Sex

IN considering the practical bearing of the new psychology of the unconscious on the everyday life of normal persons, the idea which calls for first consideration is that of the harmfulness of repression.

Now we must bear in mind the fact that we have as yet no proof that repression is usually harmful. We have seen indeed that the non-deliberate repression of early childhood is held, at least by some neo-Freudians, to be of more value than harm. Dr. McDougall suggests that, whether conscious or unconscious, repression is harmful only in so far as it produces the forgetting of a painful experience.[1]

The Harmfulness of Repression

Dr. Rivers held that conscious repression, when it is mere repression, taking the place of free,

[1] Article "Summary" in *Functional Nerve Disease*, p. 186.

opened-eyed choice, is always harmful. In such matters it may be difficult to give evidence for these views, even so far as they agree, which will convince the sceptic; but due weight must be attached to the conclusions of critically-minded medical men who are also expert psychologists, and who have many instances upon which to base their views, even if they cannot exactly point to all the relevant facts observed, the accumulation of which has brought conviction.

Yet, in spite of such opinions, we must remember that there is no decisive evidence for the harmfulness of repression except in selected individuals, who, it might be argued, were specially predisposed to nervous disease of some kind or other.

Only abnormal cases come into the hands of the doctor or psychologist, with the exception of those few people who become interested in the matter from the medical or psychological point of view. No doubt there are many cases in which apparently "normal" men have, after shell-shock, shown the evil influence of past repressions. But many soldiers exposed to equal strain have not so suffered, and it is open to any one to suggest that those who did were in some way hardly normal, having a previous tendency to mental disturbance.

And at most it could be inferred that there are repressions in many who do not apparently suffer from them, until a severe shock disturbs the whole system, when these repressions may cause serious trouble, the exact form the trouble takes being more dependent upon the repression than upon the shock itself, which fails to hurt many others.

In view, however, of all the evidence as to repressions, it becomes more likely that, even when not harmful to physical health or mental sanity, they may be of greater influence on the everyday life of normal people than has been supposed by most psychologists; or perhaps we may say that there are fewer people than we previously supposed whose minds can be described by that vague word "normal."

As we have seen Jung and some of the Freudians lay great stress upon the essentially healthy alternative to repression—the frank facing of the conflict and deliberate choice with the full consciousness of sacrifice, an act of the unified rational self, not the mere dominance of one impulse over another; or if the concern is with an unpleasant memory, we have commended the attempt to focus it in a way more favourable to the brighter portion and less favourable to the deep shadows.

There is a further mode of facing conflict suggested, namely, that of " sublimation " of the less worthy instinct or impulse. Sublimation, according to some of the Freudians, is the provision of an outlet for an impulse, not the original or primitive outlet, but a " higher " one; and this is put forward as a way of making use of the same energy in a new way, and so of avoiding wasteful, if not harmful, repression.

The Sublimation of Lower Impulses

The elderly lady without children, who finds some satisfaction for the maternal instinct in caring for her pet dogs, would afford an example of sublimation, but for the fact that the impulse is used at a lower rather than a higher level; hence we should speak here only of the " displacement " of the impulse and feeling.

It has been suggested that the surgeon's interest in operating, or the butcher's slaughtering, provides an outlet for repressed " sadism," the crude impulse towards the causing of pain. Some think that sadism may enter unwittingly into the punishments of a schoolmaster who has a marked *penchant* for the cane.

It is important at the outset to distinguish various possible interpretations of the word " sublimation." It may mean, in the first instance,

in popular usage, the occupying of time in developing interest in A, a higher pleasure or pursuit, instead of in B, a less worthy pursuit, when both cannot be followed simply because of the limits of time or circumstance. This, of course, takes place, but it is substitution, not sublimation.

Secondly, sublimation may mean the using of part of a general fund of nervous energy in a higher instead of in a lower type of activity. But such a diversion of a general fund of energy available for any kind of activity, is not sublimation in the strict Freudian sense.

Sublimation in the strict sense of the term is the diversion of a specific mental impulse from its natural channel, from which it has to be repressed, to a new associated channel, which is not prohibited by social convention or moral law. In insanity it is said, and in dreams, such diverted impulses find their issue and expression in symbolic forms. In normal mental life it may take place through some closeness of relation of B to A. Energy is thus not repressed but used in another channel. The question before us is : does this kind of diversion of specific impulse and energy really happen ?

I will take the various points raised by Dr. Ernest Jones in his discussion of the subject

of sublimation. He discusses chiefly the sublimation of the sex-impulse. In the first place, Dr. Jones's point, that those struggling with the temptations of sex have found release by applying their interests and energies to sport and work, is undoubtedly true. But this is no proof of sublimation in the strict sense. The activities of sport and work may simply take the place of sex in the first or second sense above without actually being manifestations of the special sex instinct in another form. Again, in dealing with the sex instinct, Dr. Jones claims that "practically all writers" on the subject hold "that at all events *some* of the driving force behind the impulses and interests of art, religion and many other mental activities is derived from the sexual instinct."[1]

The Sublimation of Sex-impulses

Now, it is important to be quite clear as to the meaning of the terms here. If by sex instinct is meant the instinct of reproduction, sex instinct in the narrowest sense, then surely the statement is incorrect. But Dr. Jones, of course, does not use the term sex instinct in that sense; he would undoubtedly give it some broad inclusive interpretation. Now in its broadest sense the sex instinct includes very many

Definition of Sex

[1] *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, p. 604.

elements—the appreciation of beauty of form and colour, of voice tones, of gentleness of disposition, of strength of character, and so on. All these may enter into and strengthen the attraction of one person for a member of the opposite sex. They are not, however, sexual in the limited sense of the word. No doubt sexual selection has helped to establish them in human nature, but their selection implies their pre-existence. They may be as ultimate facts in human nature as is sex impulse in the restricted sense.

Hence, when these elements reveal themselves also in art or religion it is unjustifiable to say that these elements are due to sex. Rather we should say that these other activities of art and religion may give satisfaction to (among others) certain specific impulses and desires, for example the desire for beauty, which may also be satisfied at other times in close association with the sex-impulse proper.

So far we have no proof of sublimation, in the strict sense, of the sex instinct through art or religion. There is no proof of "displacement" of the sex-impulse as a whole, when it is repressed, and when consolation is found in art and religion, though there is displacement, in a sense, of certain activities which might work in conjunction with the sex-impulse proper, but which now function

only along the lines of art and religion. Thus, at least, there is less to repress then would be the case if all these subsidiary impulses also had to be repressed.

We may, however, go further. We know that feeling and emotion may be transferred from the original object to one closely associated with it, as when the lover develops a sentimental attachment even for his lady's glove. Hence it is always possible that the close association of certain elementary processes, such as those combined in love for another, may lead to a tendency for these to be revived together, for example when an object of beauty can rouse some of them. In this way the energy even of the sex-impulse may be partially involved,and as feeling prompts action the energy of the sex-impulse may then be utilised in other affairs.

From this point of view even of orthodox psychology sublimation would seem to be *possible*, but only in so far as there is close association or resemblance between the normal stimulus of any fundamental instinct and that of action to which sublimation is desired. Take, for example, the instinct of pugnacity. William James urges that, while this instinct cries out for satisfaction in man, yet, instead of letting it out by its natural channel—in

Sublimation through Resemblance

fighting one's fellow-men—we should satisfy it by enlisting it in the fight for the conquest of nature. The possibility of this, in our view as expressed above, would depend on some resemblance between the felt difficulties in adapting nature to our needs, and the opposition of a fellow human being who rouses our fighting instincts, though the resemblance need not be discriminated. Or consider the boy battling with difficulties in mathematics. Can we enlist the energies concealed in the combative instinct? If it is to be roused, even in part, the situation must be felt in some way as similar to the normal stimulus of pugnacity, and, indeed, it does seem to appear at times when there is competition with other boys. How far this happens, apart from competition with others, seems very uncertain. There certainly seems to be very little correlation between combativeness on the playground in the ordinary sense and persistence and doggedness in intellectual matters, and perhaps this is because it has been, with some, largely "sublimed" to the higher things.

Sublimation and Genius

The whole question of sublimation seems to me to be one of the many in which individual differences are an important consideration for the educationist. One element in genius seems to be the power to see

analogies and relationships which do not occur to the ordinary man, whose associations take place on more commonplace lines. Is it not possible that a similar difference may have its effect in determining whether sublimation takes place ? In some higher types, and not only among geniuses, there may, for example, be a more delicate perception of resemblance (not perhaps always clearly discriminated) between the various situations which arouse the fighting impulse proper and those which arise when intellectual difficulties are to be fought. In such types sublimation may be possible when it is not possible to all. And this may itself be one of the reasons for the success of some and the failure of others. It may also help to account, by a theory of drainage of nervous energy (similar to that of McDougall), for the fact that moral courage is often strongly developed in persons whose physical courage is slight.

We seem at least to be on safe ground in expecting anything like sublimation, in the strict sense, to take place normally only when there is a marked resemblance between the two alternatives, or when a close association can be set up. Possibly, also, we should expect only gradual sublimation in the average individual ; having got the interest shifted slightly we may set up new associations and shift

it a little further. Such a gradual transference of interest is quite familiar to psychology. Anything beyond, of the nature of a side outlet for an otherwise-to-be-repressed impulse, must be regarded as uncertain, in normal mental life, though, in view of the growing evidence as to the mode of working of partially repressed impulses, not improbable. For the evidence grows to the effect that we have all grades of mental traits in the normal, becoming gradually of an extreme type which we call abnormal. We may expect then, in view of this, that even in the normal individual there may take place some sublimation of energy and interest, possibly unrecognised by the individual himself or by observers. It seems that, so far as abnormal cases give us any clue, displacement takes place unconsciously and along lines unrecognisable to ordinary conscious thought, for example in the symbolism of dreams. But it is uncertain how far the same will be the case with normal individuals; and in the present state of knowledge we cannot with any certainty make use of unconscious sublimation as a means of moral education.

There are cases, however, in which the psychology of sublimation, uncertain as it still is, may

already be of suggestive value. Take for example, the interesting facts revealed in reports of an investigation undertaken into juvenile crime in Manchester. It appears that the amount of juvenile delinquency varied inversely, not so much with the rental of the houses of the district concerned, as with the proximity of the district to a public park, where the young people could play. The suggestion is made that the desire of excitement was satisfied by games and sports, and so diverted from criminal adventures.[1] But is this because a different interest and impulse (towards sport) is *substituted* for another (towards crime), or because certain specific impulses are *deviated*? We can no doubt imagine that certain strong impulses may be involved in both, *e.g.* the craving for excitement or for scope for self-assertion. But one element seems much more strongly concerned in the criminal activities than in games, namely the desire for actual danger in adventure—apart from the commonsense suggestion that the things stolen form some attraction. So the example may only be one of sublimation in the first improper sense of the word mentioned above; that is the specific

Sublimation and Moral Education

[1] I have only seen a newspaper report of this investigation. I should imagine some correlation would be found between house rent and proximity of parks. But the case will serve at least as an illustration.

impulse towards crime is not truly sublimated, but there is substituted for the crime an alternative which occupies time and general energies equally agreeably without the risks of unpleasant consequences. From the practical moral point of view it may not matter which of these two explanations is the right one: for if it is really to be important that there should be sublimation proper, we must suppose that the danger of the lower use of the impulse is removed by its being used on a higher level, and that repression is not likely to take place. Yet on the supposition of mere substitution we may suppose that by neglect the evil impulse may die, sports giving adequate occupation to the youth out of working hours. This process of substitution would be inferior to sublimation only if we suppose that the repression, unconscious or conscious, of a specific impulse leading to crime would have its revenge later unless actually used in some other way, such as in sports or games, though no such thing is proved for normal individuals. The new psychology of the unconscious suggests that this is very possible, and indeed likely, in the case of individuals not quite normal, and youths with criminal propensities should probably be brought under this classification. For this reason, the founder of the George

Junior Republic would seem to be on sounder psychological grounds in devising schemes for giving scope to the group spirit, and even to the fighting instinct, of his partially reformed criminal gangs, than in attempting, at first, a complete substitution of quite different activities.[1]

For a discussion of the processes involved in a complete substitution, when it does take place, with the entire change of many of the habits of life, which must accompany it, one would have to go fully into the psychology of religion. We can only add that the psychology of conversion does at least show that a gradual process of sublimation is not the only possible method of reform.[2]

Sublimation Energy and Libido

A full discussion of sublimation would involve a consideration of the question whether there is only one general reservoir of nervous (or mental) energy on which all impulses or instincts draw, or whether each instinct is a reservoir of specific energy. Jung believes in a general vital energy which for him constitutes the Libido, which he compares to

[1] See W. R. George and L. B. Stone, *Citizens Made and Remade*, Constable.

[2] The problem of sublimation and the general moral aspects of the Freudian psychology are admirably treated by J. C. Flügel in *Freudian Mechanisms and Moral Development:* Brit. Journ. of Psych., vol. viii.

Bergson's *élan vital.*[1] This view would seem to involve the conclusion that any case of substitution, in the sense I have used the term above, is also sublimation—provided it is activity on a higher level. Freud reserves the term 'libido' for "the instinctive forces of the sexual life" in the wide sense of that phrase in which he uses it,[2] definitely excluding the ego-instincts (directed to self preservation, and so involving at least two main sources of energy). MacDougall suggests that each instinct is a reservoir of energy or at least something that liberates energy.[3] If every instinct has its own specific energy, the problem of sublimation is evidently more complicated.

Symbolism

Symbolism may not unfittingly be considered in connection with sublimation, because a symbol frequently rouses a feeling primarily associated with some other thing or idea symbolised: or, in a phrase sometimes used by psycho-analysts, the feeling is "transferred" to the symbol, though it would be more exact to say that it spreads to the symbol. We have already seen how a symbol may stand for other objects both in dreams and in other mani-

[1] *Analytical Psychology*, p. 231.
[2] *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, p. 345.
[3] *Abnormal Psychology*, p. 63.

festations of the influence of the unconscious. We have extreme examples of it in such cases as that of the woman jilted by the cobbler who sat all day making movements similar to those made by a cobbler mending shoes, though she had forgotten the fact of the engagement. McDougall tells of a young Roman Catholic officer, who, after suffering severe shock through his companions being killed under his leadership, used to bathe early each morning confessedly as a ritualistic symbolic act, " hoping thus to wash away the sins of all the comrades of his squad who had gone out of this life unprepared by ' absolution ' to meet their God."[1] Here was a symbolic working of an impulse, scarcely normal and yet conscious.

In everyday life symbolism retains some marks of symbolism in abnormal cases. The essence of a symbol is that an aspect of a concrete object (or of an idea) is selected and represented by the symbolical object with which there is a common link. Sometimes the symbol is a very close reproduction or image of the whole or part of the thing symbolised, as in the crucifix or the cross. Sometimes the symbol is very remote and unlike from the reality, *e.g.* a national flag. Feeling may be transferred to the symbol as already pointed out, or,

[1] *Abnormal Psychology*, p. 273.

in some cases, there may actually be "displacement." This latter only occurs where feeling is actually withdrawn from the original, as for example if the veneration of a relic of a saint should actually lead to the saint being less thought of himself; or where a love of power given by money is transformed into the love of the coins as a hoard of money. In reference to the ritual in religion it may be said briefly that this is appreciated best by those in whom the original feeling can spread to the symbol without dissociation from the original. It may be a danger to those who are more liable to "displacement," and being felt to be such by them may come to be regarded by them as dangerous. True sublimation, to refer back to the earlier topic of this chapter, would seem to require in this sense a displacement of feeling or impulse from the less worthy object or pursuit and not merely a spread of feeling.

In poetry, symbols and metaphors may form nuclei for a cluster of feelings usually attached to several objects. In this way a symbol may be, as Baudouin describes it, "a note rich in overtones," and undoubtedly at times the original objects may be forgotten while the poem flows on, each symbol being rich in feeling drawn from several sources which remain, for the time at least, in the uncon-

scious. The study of symbolism affords another line of approach to the view that, as we can thus get a spread of feeling to a new associated object, sublimation, in the sense of genuine displacement of interest, feeling and impulse, is more credible.

Chapter IX

THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IN EVERYDAY LIFE (*Contd*).

II—Forgetting, Doubt and Prejudice

THE influence of the unconscious upon the processes of everyday life in normal individuals is shown when groups of ideas, which should work together, are dissociated from one another, or in a more extreme case, when a hidden complex determines our thoughts and actions without our knowing it.

Such dissociation, however, is only another, but rather extreme case of what we are quite familiar with in everyday life, for example the influence of self-interest in determining beliefs and leading to what we call prejudices.

Dissociation

In normal life men often tend to keep two sets of ideas, as it were, in compartments of the mind shut off from one another. Thus the man who is religious on Sunday, but fails to put his creed into practice in business on Monday, avoids unpleasant mental controversy by keeping the two sorts of

ideas and impulses—religious and business—as completely apart as possible. We also find some men highly trained in scientific method, who drop all attempt at rational thought when it comes to politics. It would be extremely difficult, if not painful, for them to have to control their social prejudices by the ideals of objective impartiality which as scientists they hold should determine our search for truth. Hence the two departments of thought are kept separate. And it is characteristic of the antagonism within the self that considerable annoyance may be caused in such a man when an attempt is made by another person to bring the two departments into definite relation for him.

Repression and Forgetting

The Freudians hold that the influence of the unconscious in the moral mind is also shown in many slips of the tongue, in unintentional actions, and in the forgetting of things when there is an unconscious aversion from remembering them. Thus it sometimes happens that one repeatedly forgets something which is quite simple, and, one would suppose, quite fixed in the memory. In one case a name I constantly forgot, in spite of reminders, proved to be connected with an unpleasant idea associated with a special aspect of

the war; and another repeatedly forgotten word was connected with a certain aspect of the father-complex. Many examples are given by Freud, and more convincing ones by Dr. Ernest Jones. The student to whom this idea is new usually finds examples unconvincing at first; but the frequency with which such possible sources can be traced is remarkable, even allowing for the fact that life being what it is, many ideas will be associated with some unpleasant memory. One must, however, bear in mind the constant danger of guiding associations by a theory held concerning them; certainly we have not, and can scarcely ever have, evidence to the effect that most of our forgetting is due to repression, as is held by some Freudians. With this warning in mind, I may give a simple example of my own in detail. With the name "horse-chestnut" I have of course, been familiar from childhood. On a recent visit to a certain town there were many chestnut trees in the garden of my hotel, and I gathered a large number to take home to my boys. I found some days after my return that I repeatedly forgot the name chestnut when speaking to my children of their games with these chestnuts, though I had been reminded of it recently more often than usual. I then found that the idea of chestnuts suggested

the place where I gathered them, and recalled a distinctly unpleasant feeling, and I confessed to myself frankly (an idea that I had resisted before) that the visit, which I had tried to think of as pleasant, had really been rather disappointing, and included several unpleasant associations. After this dragging to the surface I never forgot the name again. Of course, in such cases, it may be the further concentration of attention on the name which results in permanent remembrance. The notable point, however, about many cases of this type is that the forgetting cannot be attributed to lack of interest, the usual cause of forgetting, and sometimes the forgetting recurs after recall, by some expedient, and after a strong decision to remember. There are many instances in which one forgets what the conscious self is most anxious to remember, and these are the most interesting cases to examine. It seems not unlikely that the nervous child who forgets repeatedly a simple fact shouted at him again and again by an irritated teacher, may be experiencing non-deliberate repression of the whole unpleasant business, and so of the fact itself. There may also be an unconscious resistance against the teacher's attempt to get his own way.

An unconscious wish also may, it is thought,

cause the forgetting of something which has to be done. Dr. Jones points out how much more apt men are to forget to send cheques than bills. Recently, I got ready my income tax return, with some reluctance, and put it ready in a place where I regularly put letters for posting. For two days I went out without taking it with me. The third day I remembered to take it, but at night I found that I had taken it with me to the University, kept it safely all day and brought it home with me again. Dr. Jones even interprets the leaving of umbrellas, &c., behind as often due to an unconscious desire to return to the houses where they are left. Darwin was, apparently, well aware of the dangers of unconscious influence in gathering evidence for, or against, his theories. He writes in his autobiography: "I had during many years followed a golden rule, namely, whenever a published fact, a new observation or thought came across me, which was opposed to my general results, to make a memorandum of it without fail and at once; for I had found by experience that such facts and thoughts were far more apt to escape from the memory than favourable ones."[1]

Popular psychology has long recognised that desire may influence belief. "The wish," we

[1] Quoted by E. Jones, *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, p. 43.

say, "is father to the thought," and it would be generally agreed that nearly always even when the wish which influences belief is conscious, it is at least dissociated from the affirmation of the belief, *i.e.* the *connection* between the two remains unconscious. Probably we may take a further step and say that even wishes which normally do not rise to consciousness may influence beliefs, and if true this would be another reason for the exploration of the unconscious in order to get further light on our prejudices. That we can find some apparently rational explanation of a belief or action is no proof that it is not due partly if not entirely to an unconscious cause. Persons who, under the influence of hypnotic suggestion, have been told to do some absurd thing at a given time, after awakening from the trance often attempt to give a sober reason for their absurd action when they carry out the instruction (which, of course, they do not remember). This fact is very suggestive for the psychology of conduct and belief.

Belief and Unconscious Desire

Probably the extreme revolt of some adolescents against their parents' religious beliefs, in which they have been strictly brought up, may be due in part to the influence of a repressed father-complex. In everyday life I think we can often note how

A's antipathy to B makes him tend to take up the opposite point of view to B's on any very debatable question: so that a good deal of intellectual dishonesty may be attributable to the influence of what is temporarily unconscious.

Doubt and the Unconscious

The psychology of the unconscious may also, it seems to me, throw light upon a curious fact in reference to some religious people. It is at times observable that a man who is very confident and dogmatic in his assertion of belief, seems to show less influence of these beliefs in his life than do some other men of cautious and even sceptical nature, whose hold on religious beliefs is much fainter. The latter seem to accomplish more on a smaller supply of driving power.

It seems to me not impossible that this difference may be explicable by reference to the unconscious influence of doubt. The dogmatic man is often one who, on principle, represses all beginnings of doubt, like a fellow-student I once knew, who left the room when sceptical arguments were being advanced by one of our friends, because, as he said, they were so unsettling. The doubts thus repressed may, however, continue to influence conscious life by weakening action finding a by-way out into consciousness when the natural one

is forbidden them, as seems so typical of the unconscious.

In the case of him who faces doubt, however, doubts have their full play in the more purely intellectual sphere. They are not repressed : they profoundly modify belief. But what belief remains can have its full influence on conscious action, without the hampering drag of hidden doubt ; so that it was doubting Thomas, who, of all the disciples, would do the bravest deed—" Let us also go that we may die with Him."

Probably the whole force of a man's personality can be thrown behind his actions or speech only when inhibiting counter impulses, whether conscious or not, are absent. A good actor is one in whom " no ingrained wishes work against his part."[1]

Sometimes, says Freud, we falter because in the unconscious there are repressed feelings which would oppose our action. And the fact that our actions are sometimes decided by these, and so seem irrational and accidental, is one of the causes of minor superstitions. The stumble of William of Normandy as he landed on English soil, was superstitiously feared by some of his companions. Freud would probably say it may have indicated

[1] Holt, *The Freudian Wish.*

a hidden hesitation or doubt as to his forward movement, in which case the superstition is simply "psychology projected into the outer world."[1]

There are still other aspects of human life on which the psychology of the unconscious may throw some suggestive light. For example, in the understanding of one's fellows, the lesser physical movements and mannerisms may sometimes express to us a deeper part of a man's personality, and may be interpreted unconsciously by others, "instinctively," as we say, and so a favourable or other impression formed, for which rational grounds cannot be given. Along these lines the new psychology of the unconscious may possibly give new life to the discredited faculty popularly called "intuition." Again, the apparent stupidity which annoys us so unreasonably in an opponent's arguments, may move our ire largely because, our unconscious self interpreting his unconscious betrayal, we feel that this lack of understanding is really a lack of sympathy with us, an unconscious *wish* not to understand. "Ein Nichverstehen," as Freud puts it, "ist oft ein Nichtverstehenwollen."

Intuition

The critical man may argue that the main tenets of this new psychology of the unconscious

[1] As Professor Laird remarks, however, William may have been sea-sick !

have not yet been *proved*, so far as normal individuals are concerned. To the question of evidence we shall refer again in the last chapter. But certainly we find a growing accumulation of evidence from several different sources that at least there is a large element of truth in some of its most important doctrines. It suggests very forcibly, and in many cases it makes it quite clear, that the unconscious plays a greater part in our thoughts, our feelings and our actions, than orthodox psychology has supposed. If its doctrines can be more firmly established, especially in reference to the more permanent effect of repression in later childhood and adolescence, they will have a great effect on the psychology of education.

Nor would they be without significance for everyday life. Attempts to understand others merely through outward indications of the unconscious are no doubt full of danger and liabilities to error. It is, however, quite different as regards self-examination, or where we have the willing co-operation of another who seeks our help. The time may not be far distant when the confessional will be supplemented by psycho-analysis. The value of bringing to clear consciousness one's inner conflicts, even at times of obtaining the help of a friend in so doing,

The Understanding of Self

is undoubtedly great. A patient often feels better when he has told the doctor even concerning physical ailments; and a little child often cannot stand the misery of concealment. Certainly, as regards ourselves, we should have to regard the knowledge merely of conscious motives, which come first into consciousness, as incomplete in judging our own actions; and an inquiry into the unconscious seems to be foreshadowed as a necessary means of fulfilling the Greek adage, "Know thyself."

A word may be added as to the ethical aspects of the new psychology. In so far as we are led to believe, as in the case of juvenile delinquents, that wrong desires are prompted by impulses and ideas dependent for their strength upon buried complexes, we should have to modify our judgment on such individuals, except in so far as they may be held to be responsible for the building up of such buried complexes. And the transition from the class of morally responsible to that of the incompletely rational, and, finally, to the insane, individual may be made more obviously gradual. Yet this is only one aspect of the ethical significance of the new psychology. A fuller knowledge of the subconscious and the unconscious means a more complete knowledge of the whole self. And

with these wider vistas of the self open to our inspection the area of conscious control would be increased and the sphere of moral responsibility, so far from being reduced by the exploring of the unconscious, as some seem to fear, would be idefinitely widened.

Chapter X

NORMAL INDIVIDUALS AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

SEVERAL times I have raised the question as to how far the tenets of Freudian psychology are true of normal individuals; and in the first chapter I pointed out that Freud began and continued his study of the unconscious largely on the basis of his findings in the investigation of cases of nervous mental diseases which were brought to him for treatment.

Now in all cases of statistics—and especially in matters of psychology and education—there is a grave danger of what we may call the "fallacy of selection." Is there a vicious selection of individuals at the outset, so that they are not representative of men as a whole? If so we cannot generalise upon findings derived from studying these selected cases.

This test seems to me to be serious and indeed fatal for some of the generalisations of Freud and other psycho-analysts; and the structure of the

new psychology of the unconscious needs to be built again largely on the foundation of evidence gathered among healthy and normal individuals. These should be studied along the lines suggested by the findings among cases of various kinds of mental disorders or abnormalities: for here, in its suggestiveness of both method and results, lies the great value of the study of the abnormal mind for the psychologist of the normal mind. Here, however, we are at once faced with a difficult question—What is a normal individual? A 'norm' is an average or standard. The true 'norm' then in the statistical sense would be about half-way between the maddest and the most sane! In common parlance, however, by the normal person is intended the healthy minded person. Now in the strict sense of the term, as we have interpreted healthy mindedness in this book, the ideally perfect mental health involves co-ordination of conduct, controlled by a unified aim, with no ignoring of alternatives in opposing impulses, with no emotions accentuated by repressions or stirred by trivial causes. In this strict sense one may ask without cynicism—Which of us is normal? Here, then, I would take a frankly pragmatic view and regard a person as normal so far as he is able to carry on everyday work and especially social affairs

without interference from irrational mental impulses and feelings (*i.e.* impulses or feelings disproportionate to the stimulus), especially impulses and feelings due to unconscious or dissociated influences. In other words, the term normal person is a convenient phrase to denote persons who are not suffering from evident mental disease, or from a decided tendency to even milder neurotic symptoms.

It will be seen that the question is one of degree : but even so we should at least rule out from the term ' normal individual ' those in whom mental trouble has been so evident as to make desirable the aid of the physician. We must look then to the building up of evidence based on the study of such normal individuals, and we must regard with extreme caution inferences based only on the examination of a few and possibly abnormal cases : such, for example, as the sweeping generalisation as to the influence of the Oedipus Complex, the limited influence (merely in very early infancy) and the ' extinction ' of which is indicated by Freud himself in one of his latest papers.[1] Careful observation of normal children suggests, so far as my own enquiries go, a frequent tendency to

[1] " The Passing of the Oedipus Complex (1924)," published in *Collected Papers*, Vol. ii.

jealousy of one child towards another in competing for a parent's affection, but an entire absence of any signs of such jealousy of a boy towards the father (or girl towards the mother) such as is implied in the doctrine of the Oedipus Complex.[1]

Apart from the analysis of some of the dreams of himself and his friends, most of Freud's own evidence about such normal persons is given in his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, dealing with forgettings and slips of the tongue. It is an interesting occupation to observe such slips in oneself or one's friends. But it should be noted that the misguiding influences are not in the full sense unconscious, but only unconscious for the moment. Such cases are examples of that " dissociation " which I suggest later is characteristic of repression in normal individuals.

With a growing acquaintance with the psychology of the unconscious and the possibility of half-repressed impulses influencing what we say or do, speaking in public has its alarming side, and slips of the tongue are often very diverting; as for example when a new Treasurer of a society, at the beginning of a speech which I heard proposing the grant of an honorarium to the Secretary, used the

[1] For a critical discussion of the Oedipus Complex see McDougall's *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, especially pp. 417–421.

word "Treasurer" instead of "Secretary" and at the end of his speech repeated the slip.

More striking evidence, however, can be gathered in reference to the influence of repression in forgetting. It is true that there seems no justification for the extreme view that all forgetting is due to repression. And the discovery that in many cases things forgotten are found to have an unpleasant aspect is not to be wondered at, for unfortunately so many things have an unpleasant aspect. Evidence is of much greater value, however, in the following types of cases, in which forgetting takes place actually *contrary* to the ordinary working of psychological laws of memory.

Repression and Forgetting

(1) *Where forgetting persists in spite of intense interest in the things forgotten.* Cases of this kind may be found recorded in various papers by psychologists (if they may be regarded as normal individuals), for example, the forgetting of names and facts associated with unhappy memories, recorded by Professor Pear and Professor Godfrey Thomson.[1] The most striking example known to me of such a kind of forgetting came under my own observation. A certain Professor X, known inti-

[1] See *e.g.* Articles in *British Journal of Psychology*, Vols. vi. and vii.

mately by me, had been with his brother at the time of the break-up of that brother's first marriage, and a companion to him in that time of distress. After divorcing his wife (at which divorce the professor had to be present as a witness) the brother married again. Some fifteen years later, Professor X, on meeting certain old friends for the first time for many years, was asked whether his brother had not been married before. This he denied; even when the name of the first wife was suggested, it was denied again. Just after leaving his friends, Professor X suddenly recalled the fact of the first marriage and divorce and was himself astonished that he could ever have forgotten it—much more have denied it when it was recalled to him; and he hastened to telephone to his friends to correct his unintentional mis-statement. I can vouch absolutely for the accuracy of this story and have complete confidence in the veracity of Professor X; and I can testify that he is an active worker and clear thinker whom none of his colleagues would accuse of neurotic tendencies.

How extensive such influence of repression due to unpleasantness may be, can only be decided by statistical enquiry among normal individuals. In a class of teachers to whom I put the question, 7 out of 24 reported they could recall cases of for-

getting unpleasant but striking incidents in their own experience.

(2) A second case of forgetting, which seems contrary to general psychological tendencies, is that in which *forgetting persists in spite of repeated reminders and special efforts to remember.* An example of this I have already given from my own experience in the forgetting of the name "chestnut" (p. 136). The repeated forgetting of some name which one tries hard to remember is another example which comes under this head.

Reference must be made to a definite piece of experimental enquiry on forgetting the unpleasant —the most serious piece of evidence against the Freudian view on this question. Dr. Wohlgemuth asked nearly 700 children to record the pleasant and unpleasant events of a holiday the day before, and tested them again ten or fourteen days later. He found the percentage of forgetting practically identical for the two classes, pleasant and unpleasant. The experiment, however, does not seem to me conclusive in view of the following three possibilities :

(*a*) Any repressions may have acted chiefly within the first twenty-four hours, and so the original list have failed to show these. I have had one or two remarkable cases in my own experience

(revealed in word-association tests) of the possibilities of such immediate repression in young children.

(*b*) The mere writing out of the list of unpleasant events, if remembered on the first day, might lessen repression if it had not already taken place.

(*c*) The mere writing down and classification of the words in pleasant and unpleasant lists might tend to recall them as a list of words, though there might be partial repression of the full experiences.

The second type of experience suggesting unconscious influences in normal persons, which I wish to exemplify, may be called Dissociation. So far as my own experience goes, and so far as the records of experiences of normal persons are available, this dissociation, rather than complete repression, seems to me to be characteristic of normal persons. I may illustrate what I mean by a case resembling the one quoted in Chapter I of the young officer who suffered from claustrophobia, traced eventually to an experience of childhood when he was shut up in a narrow passage with a savage dog. When I related this story to a friend of mine who also suffered from claustrophobia to a mild degree, which in spite of all efforts she had been unable to overcome, she was sceptical about the cause suggested in the officer's case,

Dissociation in Normal Persons

because she said she remembered that she, when a little child, had also been similarly shut up in a passage with a dog and had been greatly frightened; yet this incident, she said, had not been forgotten. I found, however, that this experience had never been thought of as a possible cause in connection with the claustrophobia, and I pointed out that this dissociation might have been the cause of the continued influence of the early experience, because it had not been brought into definite relation with the claustrophobia. I do not think that this convinced my friend; but on meeting her some few months later, and on my enquiring, she reported that her claustrophobia was distinctly improved and at a later period she reported that it was almost entirely gone. If the reader will refer to the case of the occasional paroxysms of fear described on page 30, traced eventually to anxieties about sex matters during adolescence, it will be noted that here again there was not complete forgetting of the original cause, but merely a dissociation of the memory of that cause from the consequent and repeated experience of fear.

Such dissociations I should regard as partial repressions, so that, if my view that they are characteristic of the more normal persons is true, it would be in accordance with a general tendency

for a disturbance, physical or mental, to be found in all degrees, great and small.[1] The essential mark of such dissociations is that they cause some slight disturbance even in an efficient flow of mental activity, which disturbance is appreciably modified, if not entirely banished, when the two dissociated factors are brought together in thought and seen to be causally related. To give another simple example of an even milder type, a medical man who is also a musician told me that in a Congress of Musicians, which was discussing some musical questions, he wished to speak but found himself obsessed by a most unusual feeling of nervousness and inferiority. He could not understand this feeling; but then, on reflection, he recalled that in his boyhood he had had an exaggerated idea of the importance and genius of musicians. He had felt that if he could be a musician his greatest ambition would be fulfilled but that he was far inferior to them. When this was now recalled he reflected that this was the probable origin of his present strong negative self-feeling,

[1] McDougall draws a definite distinction between dissociation and repression (*Abnormal Psychology*, Ch. xii.). He says that "every dissociation is an amnesia." But later he admits the possibility that "no dissociation takes place without some previous repression that prepares the way for it" (p. 238) and that sometimes "an active repression maintains the dissociation." In any case, he is dealing with "dissociations" of a different type from those we are discussing in this chapter.

and with this realisation the feeling disappeared and he got up to speak with confidence.

The accumulation of cases of this kind will, I think, supply more reliable evidence for the influence of the unconscious (or the momentary unconscious) in normal individuals than that based upon the study of abnormal individuals.

The explanation of "mental disturbances" by reference to the unconscious is, of course, unnecessary when some conscious and known condition will afford a satisfactory explanation. In this respect Freudian psychology sometimes seems to me lacking in plain common-sense. Thus Freud explains the accentuation of love by jealousy by reference to the love of the mother and jealousy of the father, both repressed or at least dissociated. Whereas, surely, suggestion through the admiration of another man for the loved one would be an effective influence, apart from the still more effective and general tendency for men to value more highly that which they are in danger of losing, a tendency to which Freud himself refers a few pages later.[1]

Explanation by the Unconscious

Another writer says that no one ever told a lie without an unconscious motive, as though conscious motives might not at times seem com-

[1] *Collected Papers* Vol. iv., p. 197.

pletely adequate to some people. The question as to whether the unconscious need be brought in as an explanation must sometimes be a matter of comparative judgment. Thus in the case of the student of mine who reported that he could not stand or sit with his back to a cat and that if he touched one it was only by forcing himself, one may reasonably suspect and seek to trace the influence of some early experience; his mother, however, reported that he was similarly afraid of cats (though very fond of dogs) as a mere toddler, and the later aversion might have been simply an extreme case of an abnormally developed fear of a furry animal continued long beyond the usual period.

The study of unconscious influences, then, in normal individuals involves a balancing of probabilities. Some of the phenomena of the kind we have referred to in this book may be, and no doubt occasionally are, coincidences; but they seem to occur so frequently, in such cases of forgetting and mental disturbances of the type referred to in this chapter, that the unconscious influence seems a more reasonable hypothesis. The student of the new psychology of the unconscious, however, should undoubtedly be careful to bring to the solution of such problems a sense of proportion and a due amount of common sense.

INDEX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books on the present subject are of very unequal merit, some being utterly uncritical, suggesting to the mind of the reader that the unconscious is everything and that conscious purpose and control are of little or no significance in mental life.

Below I give a list of representative books which may help to guide further reading.

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—— *The Interpretation of Dreams.* Translated by A. Brill. (Allen & Unwin.)

—— *The Psycho-Pathology of Everyday Life.* Translated by A. Brill. (Fisher Unwin.)

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